INTRODUCTORY

SERMON,

ON

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

SERMONS

ON THE

Relative Duties.

PREACHED AT
QUEEN-STREET CHAPEL,
AND
ST. PAUL's COVENT-GARDEN.

BY THE
Rev^d. THO. FRANCKLIN, M. A.
Vicar of WARE in HERTFORDSHIRE.

LONDON:
Printed and Sold by
W. BUNCE, IN RUSSEL-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN;
(SUCCESOR to the late MR. R. FRANCKLIN)
R. BALDWIN, in Pater-Noster-Row; J. DODSLEY, in Pall-Mall; T. DAVIES, Russel-Street; and C. MORAN, under the Great Piazza, Covent-Garden.

M DCC LXV.

1209/20

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

The COUNTESS of

NORTHINGTON.

MADAM,

THE following Sermons were preached before, and are therefore, with all due reſpect, dedicated to your Ladyſhip: Diſcourſes on the *relative duties* could not indeed be addreſſed with ſo much propriety to any one, as to her who is ſo eminently diſtinguiſh'd

guiſh'd for the conſtant and regular performance of them. The ſubjects are of great and univerſal concern: I flatter myſelf therefore, that the important nature of the plan will in a great meaſure palliate all defects in the execution of it.

In an age of luxury and diſſipation, when family duties are ſo generally neglected, the *Characters* ſubjoined to each diſcourſe may perhaps be thought merely ideal, and ſuch as are rather to be wiſh'd for than found amongſt us; with regard to ſome of them I had notwithſtanding the advantage of looking up to a *living example*:

example: thoſe who are unacquainted with your character, and thoſe only need be told, that the good *parent*, *wife*, and *miſtreſs*, are but three ſeveral portraitures, drawn in different attitudes, of Lady NORTHINGTON: for the truth of this I appeal to one of the beſt and moſt equitable Judges in this kingdom: I believe there is not a perſon in it who will not in this, as in every other point, readily abide by *his* determination.

That Lord NORTHINGTON, yourſelf, and family, may long enjoy that domeſtic happineſs which is the genuine fruit and beſt

beſt reward of domeſtic virtue, in uninterrupted health and proſperity, is the ſincere wiſh of,

MADAM,

Your LADYSHIP's moſt devoted,

and obedient humble ſervant,

QUEEN-STREET,
May 29. 1765.

THO. FRANCKLIN.

SERMON I.

ON DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

PROV. XV. Ver. 17.

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a ſtalled ox and hatred therewith.

AS Happineſs is the end and deſign of our being, the *land flowing with milk and honey,* which all men are in ſearch of, it is doubtleſs our buſineſs to enquire which is the beſt and plaineſt road, and that will moſt infallibly conduct us to it; and in this important concern we cannot be too cautious, becauſe when once we

SERM. I. enter into a wrong path, every ſtep we take plunges us ſtill deeper into error. So fatal is the influence of bad example, ſo ſtubborn are the prejudices contracted in our earlier years, that it is too often half the buſineſs of life to unlearn their fooliſh leſſons, and ſhake off the burthen which they have impoſed on us: the pomp and luſtre of riches and grandeur ſo dazzle the young and unexperienced mind, that it is no wonder it aſſociates with *them* the idea of happineſs; though, in reality, no two things are in their natures more diſtinct or more eſſentially different from each other, as would evidently appear to him who, but for a moment, would place before him the following neceſſary and indiſputable truth.

IF the wiſe and good Creator deſigned that all men ſhould be happy, (and to ſuppoſe otherwiſe were to impeach his goodneſs) we may reſt aſſured he would not

not have confined that bliſs, which he graciouſly intended for all, within the reach only of a few; mere externals therefore can never conſtitute true felicity. SERM. I.

WITHOUT ſubordination, without different degrees of rank and precedency, the world would be a ſcene of anarchy and confuſion; ſome conſequently muſt be richer, ſome more powerful, ſome wiſer than the reſt; but from hence to infer, that thoſe alſo muſt be happier, is an idle and a groundleſs concluſion; a concluſion, which every hour's experience deſtroys, an argument, which even the weakeſt reaſoner might confute.

IT is indeed with the minds as with the bodies of men; whatever is abſolutely neceſſary to the health and tranquillity of either is equally attainable by all; but when needleſs delicacies are ſought for to pleaſe the one, and

SERM. I. visionary refinements to delight the other, then imaginary wants grow up into real misfortunes, and the loss of ideal happiness creates sensible and lasting misery.

BETTER, says Solomon, *is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith*; that is, it is better to be happy than to appear so. The maxim inculcated in my text is the observation of the wisest of the sons of men, not the declamatory satire of a discontented indigent philosopher, who (as philosophers indeed used) railed at those riches which he could not acquire, but the sober dispassionate reflection of a potent monarch, of one who had opportunity to favor, power to assist, and, above all, wisdom to direct him in his search after happiness: he was well acquainted with the temptations of ambition, and no stranger to those cares and disappointments,

pointments, which ſo conſtantly attend its votaries: he knew too well of what ſorry ſtuff the idol was made ever to fall down and worſhip it; he had taſted that poiſon of hatred which *embitters* the feaſt of life: he had been bleſt in that love which *ſweetens* and endears it. Solomon, we ſee, in the midſt of affluence and grandeur, even in the boſom of plenty and proſperity, prefers the calm undiſturbed enjoyment of domeſtic bliſs, with peace and harmony, to the pomp of majeſty, and all the pleaſures of a crown, without them; and the greateſt epicure muſt own, when he made choice of love, he invited a nobler gueſt to grace his table, than even that queen, who came ſo far to viſit him; he choſe a gueſt, who, though he tarry but a day, can give more real entertainment, and more ſolid ſatisfaction, than all the croud of idle viſitants, who loiter round the great, and ſwell the bubble of a court.

BETTER

SERM.

I. BETTER *is a dinner of herbs where love is than a ſtalled ox and hatred therewith*; or, in other words, it is better to have a moderate competency with the pleaſures of mutual love, and an agreeable intercourſe with thoſe, whom we value and eſteem, than vaſt accumulated wealth joined to profuſion and extravagance, together with that hatred, ſtrife, and envy, which ſo frequently accompany them. There is not perhaps a ſet of beings more truly unhappy than thoſe we falſely term the great; whoſe pomp we ſee, but do not know their ſorrows; ſo true is it, that a *man's riches do not conſiſt in the abundance*; not in the quantity, but in the quality *of what he poſſeſſeth:* ſenſible was the reply of the philoſopher to the reproach caſt on his ſmall cottage; ſmall as it is, ſaid he, would to heaven, I could fill it with real friends! The higheſt ſenſual gratifications (and ſo the voluptuous man himſelf

himſelf will own) quickly pall the appetite, unleſs heightened and improved by ſocial pleaſures; by that double enjoyment which we reap from another's participation of it; and hence it ariſeth, that all the reſtleſs ſons of avarice and ambition, all the moſt unwearied purſuers after power and fame, find in their ſhort moments of reflection a cruel void aching in their hearts: even thoſe who pretend to hate mankind, and thoſe who ſhun it, would ſtill be glad to fix ſome friendſhips, to form ſome connections, to have a haven of reſt to retire to, a home to ſhelter themſelves in, and a feaſt of love to partake of. SERM. I.

IT is a certain ſign of a vitiated ſtomach, when nothing but a variety of coſtly viands, with high and luxurious provocatives, can raiſe the ſickly appetite; when we ſee men therefore run abroad after every gaudy ſcene, and embrace every fooliſh public entertainment,

it

SERM. I. it is a ſhrewd ſign they are not very fond of home; if their *treaſure* was there, *there would their hearts be* alſo.

WHEN the body languiſhes under any ſecret lurking diſtemper, it is always reſtleſs and uneaſy; perpetually ſhifting its poſition, though every altered motion gives freſh pain and diſquietude; and thus it is, I fear, with the mind alſo; which, once deprived of that eaſe and quiet, on which its health and happineſs depend, is ever ſeeking after new objects to divert its anguiſh, and deceive it into a momentary and falſe tranquillity.

SINCE then, neither that virtue which beſtows peace, nor that innocence which alone can preſerve it, are in the gift of fortune, fame, or power; ſince they are not to be ſought for in the noiſe and buſtle of a venal world, but in our own breaſts; ſince it is not the *ſtalled ox*, the pride

pride and luſtre of life, which conſtitute true felicity, but the *dinner of herbs where love is*; ſince it is this which ſheds comfort on the loweſt ſtation, and without which the higheſt muſt be miſerable, how careful ought we to be in preſerving, ſtrengthening, and improving that love and union, that peace and quietneſs, on which our happineſs does ſo immediately depend!

THAT God has implanted in every breaſt a principle of love and benevolence, is an indiſputable truth, which calls for the higheſt ſenſe of gratitude to our creator; and leſt that principle ſhould, like a drop of rain falling into the ocean, loſe itſelf in a multiplicity of objects, God hath thought fit to direct it, as it were, into proper channels; to confine it by inſeparable connections, by the ties of kindred, and the bonds of natural affection; from this fountain flow all thoſe

SERM. I. domeſtic ſweets, which alleviate the cares and inhance the bleſſings of life, thoſe ſocial duties, thoſe tender relations, which act a double part, and whilſt they make us happy here in the diſcharge of them, recommend us at the ſame time to the Almighty, and ſecure our future and everlaſting happineſs.

WHEN it depends intirely on ourſelves with whom we will ſpend our days (a happineſs which but very few can boaſt) we naturally attach ourſelves to thoſe, from whoſe imagined worth we have reaſon to expect the warmeſt returns; but experience convinces us how frequent and how fatal are the errors of our choice: we ſee through a glaſs, which preſents objects to us not only darkly but falſely. Some qualities dazzle by a ſpecious luſtre, others allure by a ſeeming ſolidity; gravity paſſes on us for wiſdom, and vivacity

vivacity for wit; and we too often find, that, inſtead of an amiable companion, and a prudent counſellor, we have linked ourſelves to an idle jeſter, or a conceal'd villain; here, indeed, ſelf-love commands and religion warrants a retreat; if the friend, on whom we relied, ſtart aſide, *like a broken bow*, we are at liberty to leave him, and ſeek a ſurer defence; but the caſe is far otherwiſe, when we are tied down by connections, bound by ſolemn obligations, by nature and by religion, to duties we cannot ſhake off or ſet light by. SERM. I.

THE fretfulneſs and ſeverity of old age would be a poor plea for the omiſſion of filial duty; nor can the petulant frowardneſs or wanton folly of children by any means excuſe a parent's negligence or contempt of them: a ſiſter's ignorance, her weakneſs, even her crime muſt not utterly blot out a brother's tenderneſs; nor a bro-

SERM. I. ther's cruelty deſtroy a ſiſter's affection: where ties are cloſe and intereſts united, we muſt not ſuffer every trifle to unlooſe them: where there is, or where there ought to be, much love, there muſt be much forgiveneſs alſo; *a man's worſt foes,* where they are foes, *are thoſe of his own houſhold*; when that home, which ſhould be our ſhelter from the injuries of a malicious world, and all thoſe cruel ſlights we receive abroad, becomes itſelf loathſome and deteſtable, when the reed we had ſo long leant on, breaks and pierces our ſides, the pain muſt needs be exquiſite. In ſuch circumſtances, it is not the ſtoic's apathy, nor all the heathen's boaſted ſuperiority over pain and diſquietude, which can ſupport us; as men we muſt feel them, but as chriſtians we muſt bear them with patience and reſignation, and happy is it for us that chriſtianity, which teaches us to bear, can teach us alſo to prevent theſe evils; it will teach us,

us, if we attend to its dictates, a kind and friendly behaviour, which alone can keep alive and maintain that mutual tenderneſs and affection, which conſtitute our domeſtic felicity. SERM. I.

To a mind that has the leaſt tincture of humanity, the leaſt feeling for the ſufferings of our fellow-creatures, there cannot be a ſpectacle more ſhocking and diſagreeable, than to ſee thoſe, whoſe blood, fame, fortunes, and intereſts are united, and whoſe good offices ſhould be mutual, torn to pieces by jealouſies, hatred and diviſion; to ſee them haraſſing and oppreſſing, who ſhould be employed in ſerving and obliging each other; ſuch ſcenes make us aſhamed of our nature, and out of love with our very being; they give us the idea of a rude and uninformed world, the antient chaos of matter, where all the elements were met together, and nothing reigned but diſcord, darkneſs, and confuſion.

SERM. I.

ON the other hand, a well-regulated and happy family, where order and harmony are preſerved, where peace, tenderneſs, love and affection reign, untainted with diſcord, unembittered by ſtrife or animoſities, where there is a conſtant, unwearied endeavour to ſerve and oblige each other; ſuch a family is doubtleſs a ſight well-pleaſing in the eyes of that God, who formed the members of it: it is an emblem (though an imperfect one) of the whole frame of nature, the glorious fabric of the univerſe, built by the divine architect, whoſe wiſdom ordained its ſymmetry and proportions, where each part is perfect in itſelf, and contributes at the ſame time to the beauty, magnificence, and duration of the whole.

LET us then endeavour to cultivate in our minds a ſettled good will, an habitual benevolence, without which we ſhall

ſhall always fall ſhort of our duty, both towards God, and towards our neighbour: and here let me obſerve to you, that love to man, no more than love to God, can ever conſiſt in the obſervance of mere external forms; a compliance with poſitive inſtitutions, and decent ceremonies, ſhew a reſpect and deference highly commendable in the one; the practice of politeneſs and good breeding ſignify a readineſs to ſerve and oblige in the other: but the profeſſions of the tongue are as a *tinkling cymbal*, unleſs they flow from the dictates of an honeſt and an upright heart; we muſt exert our benevolence, we muſt manifeſt the love of our neighbour, by the ſame means as the ſupreme Being makes known his love to us, by continued acts of kindneſs and beneficence. SERM. I.

We muſt learn therefore (if we expect to live peaceably) to bear with the infirmities, to pardon the errors, to give way

SERM. I. way to the diſpoſitions of thoſe with whom it is our lot to be any ways connected. As depraved as human nature is, there are few tempers ſo hard, but a perpetual endeavour to pleaſe, will ſoften into love and gratitude; we muſt not always expect to meet with all we could wiſh for in our companions, becauſe the ſweeteſt minds may be ſoured by accident or misfortune, the chearfulleſt face ſaddened by pain or ſickneſs; and if we reſolve to be in good humour ourſelves, no longer than whilſt all round about us continue ſo, our ſocial happineſs will very ſeldom, I fear, be of any long duration.

LET us remember then, that as afflictions do not, ſo neither do pleaſures, ſpring out of the duſt: every relative and ſocial duty is founded on mutual obligations; where the ſeeds of love and friendſhip are not ſown, or where what ſprings up from them is not cultivated and

and improved, it will be but *as the graſs growing on the houſe-top, wherewith,* as the glorious language of the pſalmiſt expreſſeth it, *the mower filleth not his hand, neither he that bindeth the ſheaves his boſom.* SERM. I.

A KIND and tender behaviour, therefore, to thoſe with whom we live, in whatever ſituation of life we are, is what I would recommend and enforce as a branch, and no inconſiderable one, of Chriſtian duty; a duty indeed, which (like the reſt of thoſe injoined us in the holy goſpel) doth moſt amply reward itſelf. Our Saviour came down from heaven to *bring peace upon earth* and *good-will towards men*; that peace and good-will which makes the happineſs of the whole and of every individual. The reſult of all then that hath been here advanced is this, that, if we hope to be happy in our ſeveral ſtations and profeſſions, in all the various circum-

SERM. I.

ſtances of this life, we muſt be humane, charitable, and benevolent; whatever makes us lovely will make us beloved, and whatever tends to the peace and felicity of our fellow-creatures muſt render us amiable in the ſight of our Creator: it is this alone which can make the humbleſt lot an object of envy and admiration, the *dinner of herbs* a feaſt for an epicure.

TO CONCLUDE——

The viſible connection between our duty and our happineſs is too apparent to be further inſiſted on; in all our private concerns, all thoſe relations and connections which we bear to one another, that love and affection, which I have now endeavoured to recommend, is the fountain and foundation of all our ſocial pleaſures; and as our domeſtic bliſs is a point in which we are every one of us deeply and intimately concerned, our time, I think, cannot be better

better employed than in the due reflection on thoſe means, which may moſt effectually promote it: I muſt beg you therefore to conſider what hath now been offered as preparatory to ſome ſelect diſcourſes, wherein I propoſe to explain and illuſtrate the relative duties; that is to ſay, the duties of child and parent, ſervant and maſter, wife and huſband: on the due performance of theſe mutual and indiſpenſible obligations the happineſs of man doth, I apprehend, in a great meaſure depend; and according to the manner in which we diſcharge theſe important offices, we ſhall be rewarded or puniſhed both here and hereafter.

THE

THE DUTY OF CHILDREN TO PARENTS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

SERMON II.

DUTY TO PARENTS.

EPHES. vi. Ver. 2, 3.

Honour thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayeſt live long on the earth.

HAVING endeavoured, in a previous diſcourſe, to recommend to you the neceſſity and advantages of mutual love and harmony, as the only means of inſuring domeſtic peace and happineſs, I ſhall proceed, in purſuance of what I there propoſed, briefly to explain the nature of thoſe ſtrong ties and connections by which men

SERM. II. men in this life are bound to each other; and to illuſtrate the ſeveral important duties ariſing from them: in the due diſcharge of which both our temporal and eternal welfare are ſo nearly and intimately concerned. I ſhall therefore beg your ſerious attention to ſome reflections on what we uſually term the *Relative Duties*, which are for the moſt part ranked under the ſix following heads, namely,

The Duty of Children to Parents,
And of
Parents to Children.

The Duty of Servants to Maſters,
And of
Maſters to Servants.

The Duty of Wives to Huſbands:
And of
Huſbands to Wives.

On each of which I ſhall give you a ſeparate diſcourſe.

I ſhall

I SHALL begin therefore with the duty expreſſed in the words of my text, SERM. II.

Of CHILDREN to PARENTS.

Honour thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayeſt live long on the earth.

As this duty is the firſt we are capable of practiſing, and which as ſoon as we have the leaſt dawn of reaſon we are called upon to perform, it is very fitly placed at the head of the ſecond table in the decalogue, and deſerves of all ſocial duties firſt and principally to be conſidered; becauſe on this, as I ſhall in the ſubſequent diſcourſe endeavour fully to prove, the others do immediately and neceſſarily depend.

ALL thoſe philoſophers who have moſt curiouſly explored the goodneſs of the Almighty in the animal creation, have concurred in obſerving that the

SERM. II. inſtinctive tenderneſs of creatures towards their young is a worthy example for the beſt of parents, and a ſevere, though ſilent, reproach of the bad amongſt us; but ſtrong as this natural affection is in every claſs of irrational beings, it remains no longer than whilſt it is abſolutely neceſſary to the propagation and ſupport of the ſpecies: the connection on each ſide is ſoon loſt, another love ſucceeds, another race riſes up to enjoy it; but man is graciouſly diſtinguiſhed by his Maker, in this, as in every other particular, and maintains his ſovereignty over the creation: he is endued with faculties to be ſenſible of, and with power to repay the benefit; the care and tenderneſs of the parent, the love and gratitude of the child, are conſtant and permanent, and the mutual exchange of affection carried on from the earlieſt dawn of life even to the lateſt period of it.

IN man, indeed, as in every other creature, the love implanted in the breaſt of the parent towards the offſpring is much more intenſe than that implanted in the child towards its parent. And herein the providence of God is immediately viſible, and the reaſon ſufficiently obvious; the child, we know, is helpleſs and deſtitute, and without that care and tenderneſs muſt inevitably periſh; whereas the parent may ſubſiſt (though not with an equal ſhare of comfort and ſatisfaction) without the return of filial duty. SERM. II.

BUT this, as well as every other, reaſon, would be a poor plea for the omiſſion, or rather perhaps to every grateful and ingenuous mind, would be a ſtronger inducement to the performance of it.

But that no plea or excuſe whatever can indeed be admitted will be ſufficiently evident, when we come to con-

SERM. II. ſider in the ſubſequent diſcourſe, the various parts of this duty, together with our neceſſary and indiſpenſable obligations to the practice of it.

Honour thy father and mother, ſays the apoſtle, *that it may be well with thee, and thou mayeſt live long on the earth.*

BY *honour*, in the more ſtrict and confined ſenſe of the word, is underſtood no more than that deference and reſpect wich is due from inferior to ſuperior, varying according to the various ties and relations, the ſeveral circumſtances and conditions of human life; excluſive of parental authority, it is the accuſtomed tribute of youth to age and experience, in grateful return for the benefits of its advice, and the influence of its example; and this doubtleſs is a part, and no inconſiderable one, of the duty here injoined.

THE higheſt deference, reſpect, and ſubmiſſion, ſhould be ſhewn to parents, becauſe they are, next to God, the moſt proper objects of them. *Curſed be he*, ſays the law of Moſes, *that ſetteth light by his father or mother*: where no reſpect is paid to the perſon we can hardly expect obedience to his commands, and we have ſeldom any great love or eſteem for thoſe whom we treat with levity and contempt. SERM. II.

When we conſider that the pains and afflictions which attend the latter part of our lives are ſo many and ſo great, the advantages and privileges of age ſo few and inconſiderable, we cannot without the utmoſt inhumanity abridge it of the leaſt of them: And yet this branch of filial duty is very often ſhaken off, and very frequently neglected, and particularly by thoſe who are a little advanced in life, who as ſoon as they begin to receive reſpect and deference themſelves,

SERM. II. ſelves, forget to pay it where it is due, and even whilſt they enjoy the good effects of parental inſtruction, are regardleſs of thoſe to whom they are originally indebted for it.

THE greater the obligations are which we have at any time laid on others, the better treatment do we of courſe expect in return, and with the greater degree of warmth do we reſent any injury or contempt from them; the ſlighteſt wound gives the moſt exquiſite pain, when inflicted by the hand we love. What then muſt the parent feel, who, inſtead of reciprocal tenderneſs and affection, inſtead of that ſubmiſſive deference, which he has a right to expect, meets with ſurlineſs and pride, with a contemptuous diſregard of him, from a thankleſs child? Even expreſſions of civility, even that complaiſance and good-breeding, which to others may appear amiable, in his eyes will ſeem cold

cold and diſreſpectful. How can we perſuade ourſelves to fill that heart with anguiſh and diſquietude, which is ſo ſolicitous for our welfare; or give a moment's uneaſineſs to thoſe who ſpend their lives in providing for our wants, defending us from danger, and promoting our joy and happineſs! SERM. II.

BUT beſides this deference and reſpect, theſe outward marks of eſteem, there is ſomething more required: the ſincereſt teſtimony of filial affection, (and which muſt doubtleſs be included in the precept of my text) is obedience. To *honour our parents* is to obey them, to ſubmit implicitly to their orders, and dutifully to perform whatever is enjoined by them.

AND here (as in almoſt every duty) our Saviour himſelf hath condeſcended to be a guide and example to us. The ſons of men need not err, for the ſon of

SERM. II. of God hath pointed out to them the measure of their obedience: he submitted to the commands of his Almighty Father, and obeyed them chearfully, without reproach, murmur, or reluctance; he endured the most painful sufferings, with patience and content; even in the hour of death, he petitions with humililty, but submits with resignation; *Father, if it please thee, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.*

WHERE there is absolute and total dependance on one side, there should be total and absolute submission on the other; here then a title to obedience is already established, and it is as vain as it is ungrateful to dispute it: resistance can be of no effect, there is therefore in the rebellion of children, as much folly, as wickedness.

BUT moreover that which is the indispensable duty of children, is their real

real and trueſt intereſt alſo; it is the peculiar and diſtinguiſhing advantage of parental power, that the intereſt of him who lays the command, and of him who performs it, is for the moſt part plainly, and indiſputably, the ſame. The magiſtrate may, and perhaps frequently doth, compel his inferior to actions highly diſguſtful, and ſometimes extremely pernicious to him, becauſe he has a ſecret view to his own advancement; the general may force his ſoldiers to ruſh on danger and death to promote his glory; and the deſpotic tyrant may ſacrifice millions of his ſubjectsto his own pride and ambition: But the father has no private intereſt to promote in oppoſition to his children, no ambition but to make them amiable, no views but to make them happy; here then there can be no doubt or jealouſy, the relation they ſtand in, exempts them from the leaſt ſuſpicion of fraud or treachery; and, in a world where there is ſcarce any

SERM. II.

SERM. II.

thing elſe, how ineſtimable is ſuch ſincerity!

So agreeable to the law of nature and reaſon is this important duty, as to be held even by the un-enlightened heathens in the higheſt eſteem and veneration: "he that is undutiful to his "parents, (ſays the Athenian law,) ſhall "be incapable of holding any office;" amongſt the Romans alſo, if a father came to want, and the ſon, if able, did not relieve him, he was ſentenced by the laws againſt ingratitude, to be the father's ſlave for life; the wiſe, and pious rulers in thoſe times, were doubtleſs of opinion, that no obligations could influence, no ties could bind the man who had broken through the bonds of nature; that the love of his country could never reſide in *that* breaſt which was void of filial affection; that where the father's authority was ſlighted, the magiſtrate's would be but ill ſubmitted to; and that *he* in ſhort

muſt

must be very unfit to *rule*, who had never learn'd to *obey*. SERM. II.

But further, ——

BY *honouring* our parents, is undoubtedly meant the giving them all the aſſiſtance, ſupport, and defence, which they may at any time ſtand in need of.

SUCH are the viciſſitudes of human life, that it is no ſtrange or uncommon circumſtance, to ſee penury or diſtreſs uſurp the ſeats of joy and plenty; to ſee thoſe who had flouriſhed in the earlier part of life in affluence and proſperity, reduced at the cloſe of it to want and miſery, oblig'd to ſtruggle with the world at an age when they are moſt unfit to encounter it, and inſtead of reſting in peace after a troubleſome journey, compelled to bear the heat and burthen of the day. Here then filial duty hath the nobleſt opportunity of exerting its gratitude: all that a child can do, is no more than

SERM. II. what he is ſtrictly bound to do, and no danger is ſo great, but in ſuch a caſe he ſhould readily go through it; no toil ſo ſevere, but he ſhould moſt willingly bear it.

A numerous family has often ſunk thoſe, who, without it, might have lived in the utmoſt ſplendor; to the weight of its branches the tree may owe its decay: here the obligation receives new force; to relieve the wants we ourſelves have cauſed, is but common juſtice; to heal the wounds which our own hands have made, is but common humanity.

AGE, we know, has always a melancholy attendance. Infirmities vex, diſeaſes torment, and death affrights it; health ſcarce enlivens, ſickneſs totally depreſſes it; it calls for the compaſſion therefore and aſſiſtance of all; from man to man, it implores them as favors; from the parent to his children it demands them as a debt; the greateſt indeed which

we

we can contract, and the first which we are bound to discharge: *My son*, says the wise man, *help thy father in his age, and grieve him not as long as he liveth, and if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not when thou art in thy full strength; for the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten, it shall be added to build thee up, in the day of affliction it shall be remembered.* But——

ANOTHER method of *honouring* our parents is, to have such a regard to our own character and reputation in the world, as never, if possible, to be guilty of any action which may reflect shame or disgrace upon them.

THE consequences of vice are seldom indeed confined to the person of the offender, they reach much further, and affect others as well as ourselves. The malice and ill-nature of mankind is always ready enough to attribute the follies

SERM. II.

follies of children to the negligence, or example of their parents. What ſhall we ſay then to thoſe, who inſtead of imparting joy and ſatisfaction to the virtuous parent, repay their cares and tenderneſs with ignominy and diſgrace; who, inſtead of adding dignity to their age, and weight to their authority, by a licentious and abandon'd life, load their hearts with ſorrow, increaſe the burthen of their years, and *bring their grey hairs in ſorrow to the grave?*

To *honour* our parents then is, *firſt*, to ſhew reſpect and deference to them in all our words and actions: *ſecondly*, readily and implicitly to hearken to their precepts, and obey their commands: and *laſtly*, to ſupport, defend, and relieve them: to ſupport thoſe who have defended us, to relieve thoſe who have relieved us. *Honour thy father with thy whole heart*, ſays the ſon of *Sirach*, *and forget not the ſorrows of thy mother; remember*

that

that thou waſt begot of them, and how canſt thou recompence them the things which they have done for thee? SERM. II.

THE obligation indeed is not eaſily recompenced, becauſe it is not eaſily known; true generoſity always enhances the value of the gift by concealment: innumerable inſtances of paternal tenderneſs paſs over, and are forgotten, and thouſands are never ſeen.

The father, ſays the wiſe man, *waketh for the daughter when no man knoweth, and the care for her taketh away ſleep*; to be ſupported when we are unable to ſupport ourſelves, to be defended from the world at a time when we have not power to contend with it, to receive not only preſent maintenance, but to have our future joy and happineſs provided for, are ſurely benefits which call for the higheſt and ſincereſt acknowledgments: but the true value of this bleſſing like moſt

SERM. II. moſt others is perhaps ſcarce ever perceived till it is loſt; whilſt we revel at the feaſt we forget the maſter of it, and ſeldom know the true merit of paternal affection, till we feel the want of it.

LOOK round upon the ignorant and illiterate, the poor and deſtitute, the vicious and abandoned part of mankind, enquire into the cauſes of this depravity, the ſource of their indigence, the reaſons of their ignorance, and you will moſt generally find that theſe unhappy wretches are orphans; ſuch as had no parents to inſtruct or provide for them, a wandering flock who had no guide to direct them, *no ſhepherd to feed them in green paſtures*, or *lead them beſide the waters of comfort*.

LET the reflection on their unhappy circumſtances ſink deep into the ſouls of thoſe who have eſcaped them; let us view the ſtorm at a diſtance, and bleſs the pilot who ſaved us from it, let thoſe who

have enjoyed, who have been bleſt with the life of their parents, be truly thankful for the benefit, and by repaying, ſhew that they deſerve it. But there is alſo another inducement to the practice of this virtue, which may poſſibly have ſome influence upon us, and that is, the hope of ourſelves receiving the benefit of it. We muſt pay that duty as children, which as parents, we may hereafter expect to be paid to us. SERM. II.

By the ſame that a man ſinneth, ſays the ſcripture, *by the ſame alſo ſhall he be puniſhed*: the undutiful child will moſt probably be an unhappy father, the poiſoned cup ſhall return to his own lips, he ſhall meet with that diſobedience from his children which he had himſelf been guilty of, and ſhall want that duty and reſpect which he refuſed to pay.

THE laſt incitement to the practice of this duty which I ſhall now mention

SERM. II. is, that moſt perſuaſive one ſubjoined in the text: *Honour thy father and mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayeſt live long on the earth.*

IT is obſervable, that the command to *honour* our parents is, as St. Paul remarked, *the firſt commandment with promiſe:* Thus doth religion, which in the language of holy writ, is always ſtiled *wiſdom*, provide for thoſe who *walk in her ways; length of days is in her right hand, and in her left riches and honours. Honour thy father, and thy mother, that thou mayeſt live long on the earth:* that is, if by an obedient and dutiful behaviour to thy parents, thou doſt prolong their life, and contribute to their health and happineſs, thou ſhalt thyſelf be rewarded with the ſame bleſſings. God we ſee, doth ſo peculiarly delight in the execution of this duty, that he hath promiſed even to ſuſpend, for a time, the laws of nature in

favour

favour of thoſe who comply with it; as if the Divine Being were himſelf unwilling to interrupt us in the performance of an office ſo grateful to him. SERM. II.

IF, then, we expect to live a long and happy life, let us be careful, as many of us as are able, to deſerve it. Not all, indeed, have it in their power. Death ſometimes cancels the debt, before thoſe who have contracted can poſſibly diſcharge it; in the firſt dawn of life, in that part of our exiſtence when we firſt receive the benefit we are not ſufficiently ſenſible of it; and when we become ſo, it frequently happens, that it is too late to ſhew our acknowledgments of it. As ſoon as men, therefore, arrive at an age, when they can thoroughly feel the good effects of their parents care; and can reflect, as they ought, on all their paſt acts of goodneſs and tenderneſs towards them, then, and then alone, they have it in their power to make ſome return for it. It is their duty, then, to lay

SERM. II. hold on the glorious opportunity. Few parents live long enough to receive from their children that rational and ſincere obedience which they have merited from them. They ſow early, and reap late; and therefore, doubtleſs, more abundant ſhould be the harveſt.

To conclude, therefore, with a ſhort character of

A GOOD SON.

THE *good* and dutiful *Son*, then, is one who *honoureth* his parents, by paying them the utmoſt deference and reſpect; by a reverential awe and veneration for them; a filial affection for their perſons, and a tender regard for their ſafety and preſervation; a conſtant and chearful attendance to their advice, and a ready and implicit obedience to their commands. As he becometh every day more ſenſible of his obligations to them, he grows every day more willing and more ſolicitous to repay

pay them. He employs his youth to ſupport their age; his abundance to relieve their wants; his knowledge and ſtrength, to ſupply their infirmities and decay. He is more careful of his character and reputation in the world, becauſe theirs depends upon it. Ever anxious for their welfare, and attentive to their happineſs, he endeavours, by every method in his power, to prolong *their* days, that his *own* may be *long in the land.* He reſts aſſured, that God will not only bleſs obedient children here, but will reward them with the bleſſing of heaven, where it ſhall be *well with him* for ever; where we ſhall all join, ſon and father, daughter and mother, wife and huſband, ſervant and maſter; all the relations and connections of this life, to honor one great Parent, Protector, Lord, and Maſter of us all:

SERM. II.

To whom, &c.

THE

THE DUTY OF PARENTS TO CHILDREN.

BRITISH MUSEUM

SERMON III.

DUTY to CHILDREN.

EPHES. vi. 4.

Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

AS all relations are founded on mutual and reciprocal dependencies, and we can have no right to demand where we have never beſtowed any thing, it muſt neceſſarily follow, that the love, reſpect, and obedience, which are required of children, are founded on thoſe benefits which they have from time to time received at the hands of their parents, who are thus re-

SERM. III.

warded for their care and tenderneſs. As children, therefore, are bound to ſerve and reverence their parents, parents are alſo on their part, equally obliged to ſupport and provide for their children; not *to provoke them to wrath* and diſobedience, and then reproach them for it, but the more effectually to ſecure to themſelves honor and reſpect; to educate them in ſuch a manner, as to make them acquainted with every part of filial duty; to *bring them up* ſoberly, virtuouſly, and religiouſly; or as the apoſtle expreſſes it, *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

THOUGH the affection of the parent towards the child is, as I obſerved to you in my laſt diſcourſe, much ſtronger and more intenſe, than that of the child towards the parent, and conſequently the breach of duty on one part, by no means ſo frequent as on the other; ſuch, notwithſtanding, is the weakneſs and depravity

depravity of human nature, that children may, as St. Paul hath remarked, be *provoked*, and juſtly *provoked to wrath*, by the faults and follies of their parents, as will more evidently appear, when we come to conſider the many errors, weakneſſes, and imperfections which we are all liable to, and to point out the principal ſources of mutual contempt, hatred, and animoſity which make ſo many families unhappy. SERM. III.

CHILDREN may be *provoked to wrath* by the churliſhneſs and inhumanity of their parents; by their weakneſs and indulgence; by their partiality; their injuſtice, or their impiety. Permit me to make a few ſhort reflections on every one of them.

AND firſt then, Children may be *provoked to wrath*, by the churliſhneſs and inhumanity of their parents.

SERM. III.

IT is not in the leaſt to be wondered at, that men of moroſe and cruel diſpoſitions ſhould *provoke their children to wrath*, by harſh and ſevere treatment of them: their own home, is perhaps, the only place where they can command without oppoſition, and tyrannize with impunity; as cowardice and cruelty are inſeparable, they will moſt probably exert their authority where it cannot be diſputed, and inſult where they cannot be reſiſted. Parents are every day found amongſt us, who ſhew their power only by the abuſe of it; who treat their children as ſlaves; who, yielding to every impulſe of paſſion and reſentment, always rebuke with aſperity, and chaſtiſe with rigor: but ſurely ſuch ſavages are a diſgrace to human nature: Youth hath a thouſand pleas to urge in its favour which the deafeſt ear muſt liſten to: ignorance hath always a claim to pity; and innocence a title to protection. There are very few faults indeed in children

children which are not pardonable; and half their errors ſhould only be attributed to inexperience and inadvertency. Let the ſevere parent reflect, that if he *provokes his children to wrath*, he will be himſelf, in all probability, the greateſt ſufferer by it; that diſtance and reſervedneſs muſt naturally produce a ſervile dread and diffidence; whilſt on the contrary, an open and ingenuous confidence on one ſide, would as naturally beget eſteem and regard on the other; let him reflect, that though he may be obeyed, he cannot be loved; that the blow will be felt, though it is not returned; and, that thoſe, who cannot retaliate, will, notwithſtanding, reſent the injury. Above all, let the ſevere parent remember, that *he alſo hath a Father in heaven*, to whom he looks up for love, tenderneſs, and affection, for pardon, indulgence, and reward; if he ſhould exerciſe his parental authority in like manner, and rule over his children

SERM. III. dren with *a rod of iron*, if he ſhould be *extreme to mark what is done amiſs, who might abide it?*

BUT, ſecondly, children may be *provoked to wrath* by the contrary extreme of weakneſs and indulgence.

A MORE dangerous, and certainly a much more frequent error in parents, is an unreſtrained and exceſſive fondneſs; and this, however ill calculated it may ſeem for ſuch a purpoſe, may, in the end, as juſtly and as inevitably *provoke children to wrath* as the oppoſite extreme of churliſhneſs and ſeverity; the various paſſions and affections of human nature begin very early to exert and diſplay themſelves, and if they are not properly reſtrained and directed, will of neceſſity have a fatal and unconquerable influence over the whole tenor of our lives; if we give up the reins to appetite, at an age, when reaſon is too weak to guide them

them, and ſuffer the will to rule with deſpotic ſway, uncontroul'd by judgment, and unaw'd by parental authority, every vice will gain daily ſtrength by habit, and every propenſity to evil take ſuch deep root in the ſoul, as never to be extirpated; if the child is never corrected, it is moſt probable that the man will never be virtuous; and if the child is always complied with, the man will be always unhappy. How often indeed do children live to condemn that fondneſs, which was the ſource of their guilt; and to curſe that indulgence which was the foundation of their miſery!

BUT there is another method of *provoking children to wrath*; where the reſentment on one ſide is highly warrantable, and the injury on the other to the laſt degree inexcuſable; and that is, the partial affection of a parent for one child, in preference to others, equally deſerving

SERM. III.

ing of it; this is acting in direct oppoſition, both to the will and to the conduct of our Almighty Father, who, in his diſpenſations towards man, teacheth us another and a better leſſon: the children of nature all divide his tenderneſs, all ſhare his equal love, without partiality, prejudice, or diſtinction: we ſhould follow his ſteps, and imitate his juſtice. Nothing but a ſuperior ſhare of duty and obedience, can lay claim to ſuperior favour and indulgence: no external beauty of form, however ſtriking; no natural accompliſhments, however excellent; no pre-eminence of genius, talents and abilities, however brilliant and engaging; ſhould have ſuch weight in the ſcale of parental love, as to deſtroy that equal ballance which ſhould be ever held with a ſteady and unſhaken hand. When this is once loſt, the foundations of domeſtic happineſs are undermined; ſtrife, diviſion and animoſity uſurp the ſeats of harmony and peace;

peace; and where jealouſy and hatred are thus early ſown, they generally ſhoot up into a rank and fruitful harveſt of guilt and miſery. When children find it impoſſible to pleaſe, they will naturally loſe all deſire of pleaſing; where they are neglected, they will neglect; and where they are injured, they will reſent. Theſe, and a thouſand other ill conſequences, which it is unneceſſary to enumerate, will inevitably flow from the partial diſtribution of parental tenderneſs: and yet there is ſcarce a large and numerons family to be met with, where this evil is not in ſome meaſure ſeen, felt, and lamented. SERM. III.

THERE are, we muſt acknowledge, ſtrange weakneſſes, prejudices and prepoſſeſſions in human nature, not eaſily to be accounted for, which act, no doubt, as forcibly on parents as on other men; but when we are attacked by them, we muſt call in reaſon and religion to our

SERM. III.

aid, to combat theſe prejudices, to counteract and ſubdue theſe weakneſſes and prepoſſeſſions: above all, we muſt remember to place ourſelves in the ſituation of thoſe who are to ſuffer by them; to obſerve the golden rule, the great criterion of juſtice, and *do as we would be done unto.*

But ——

There is another method, and which is too often practiſed by angry and inexorable parents, of *provoking children to wrath*, by unjuſtly defrauding them of their patrimony, without juſt cauſe. *If any provide not for his own*, ſays the apoſtle, *and eſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe, he hath denied the faith, and is worſe than an infidel:* he muſt, indeed, be ſtrictly and literally worſe, more deſtitute of feeling and humanity, than the moſt ſavage and illiterate barbarians, amongſt whom, ſtrangers as they are to God and religion, the crime of deſerting

and

and defrauding their offſpring, is yet unknown. Children have a clear and indiſputable right, from the great charter of nature, to the poſſeſſions of their parents; and unleſs that right is forfeited by ſome flagrant enormity, it cannot, with any degree of equity, be wreſted from them: the laws of men, in this caſe, coincide and co-operate with the laws of God; and the claim of inheritance, in all civilized nations, is univerſally allowed and conſented to, unleſs the contrary is peculiarly ſpecified: thoſe offences, therefore, ſhould be of a very heinous nature, and accompanied with moſt aggravating circumſtances, which can excuſe a parent in bereaving his children of their patrimony: no venial inadvertency ariſing from inexperience, no imprudent ſallies of unguarded youth, no unpremeditated acts of caſual diſobedience can palliate ſuch injuſtice: for the moſt part, indeed, ſcarce any other cauſe can be aſſign'd for the commiſſion SERM. III.

SERM. III. of this crime, but whim, caprice, or reſentment: ſome there are who ſcreen their guilt beneath the veil of piety, and cloath their vice in the habit of a virtue: but this is a poor and wretched ſubterfuge; the mean evaſion of cruelty and pride. The man, who deprives his children of their inheritance, and beggars his poſterity, to ſooth his vanity by ill-placed beneficence, though he may be canonized as a ſaint upon earth, will never be enrolled among the bleſſed in heaven. It is, upon the whole, an act of injuſtice which, however the offender may reconcile to himſelf by ſpecious arguments, however by deluſive reaſons he may perſuade the world to paſs over or approve, his conſcience will moſt probably reproach him for in this world, and his Creator puniſh in that which is to come.

THERE is, moreover, another branch of parental duty, the omiſſion of which muſt

must *provoke children to wrath*; and that is, not only to bequeath to them their due patrimony, not only to provide for their future eaſe and happineſs, but to promote by every method in their power, their preſent and immediate welfare: to adminiſter to their neceſſities, and relieve their diſtreſs, to double every comfort, and leſſen every calamity. The inheritance, which we leave our children, is no more than a debt which we owe to nature, and which juſtice demands of us: there is very little merit in parting with that which we can no longer retain: poſthumous charity and generoſity, therefore of this, as of every other kind, is of ſmall value or eſteem. It often happens, that parents bequeath large eſtates, after their deaths, to children, whom they had kept in the utmoſt penury all their lives, and with-hold every thing from their family, till the hand of God wreſts it from them: and what is generally the conſequence of this? the children

SERM. III. children are *provoked*, and juſtly *provoked*, *to wrath*: the omiſſion of duty on one part produces a neglect of it on the other; the bonds of mutual affection are gradually looſened and unwoven: to the warmth of love and tenderneſs, ſucceed coldneſs and indifference; thoſe, who ſtand in need of ſupport and aſſiſtance, and at the ſame time think they have a right to it, will be greatly hurt and diſappointed, when it is unkindly with-held from them: inſtead of praying for the continuance of their parents life, they are tempted, but too often, to look forwards with ſecret ſatisfaction, towards the diſſolution of it: and where indeed, there is penury, diſtreſs and reſentment on one ſide, with affluence, avarice and inhumanity on the other, all the aid, which filial affection, morality and religion can afford, will ſometimes prove ineffectual. If parents, therefore, hope for love, tenderneſs, and obedience from their children, they muſt,

as

as long as they live, in proportion to their circumſtances and abilities, aſſiſt, ſupport, and relieve them: we muſt love, in ſhort, if we expect to be loved; we muſt give pleaſure and ſatisfaction, if we expect to receive them; we muſt look up, in this, as in every other point of duty to the great ſtandard of perfection, the tender, affectionate, univerſal Parent, the Creator and Father of mankind; *He* deals forth his bounties to all his children, with a liberal and impartial hand; directs them by his council, guards them by his providence, and ſupports them by his power; guides, inſtructs, and aſſiſts them here, and encourages them in the practice of duty and obedience, by the unalienable reverſion of a noble inheritance hereafter.

SERM. III.

But laſtly: ——

Parents may *provoke their children to wrath*, by their own wicked and licentious lives: not only by a neglect and

SERM. III. and diſregard of *them*, but by the little attention which they pay to *themſelves*, and to their own character and reputation in the world. As parents frequently ſuffer for the follies of their children, ſo may children alſo ſuffer for the follies of their parents: it becometh all men to act with prudence and diſcretion; to behave ſoberly and religiouſly, and to abſtain from every evil word and work; but, it is peculiarly incumbent on every father and mother, to keep a *conſcience void of offence*; to put a bridle on their lips, and place a guard over their hearts: the ſolemn relation which they have entered into, the important office which they are bound to perform, demand a more than ordinary care of their conduct in every particular. The minds of children are ſo ſuſceptible of every impreſſion; ſo intirely guided by the direction, and influenced by the example of thoſe who are immediately connected with them, that no caution can be too great,

no

no reſtraint too rigid and ſevere, with re- SERM.
gard to every thing done and ſaid within III.
their preſence, or within the ſphere of
their knowledge and comprehenſion.
There is a reverence due to youth, as well
as age: not an action ſhould be commit-
ted before children, which hath the leaſt
tendency towards ſin; not a word ſhould
eſcape our lips, that might taint the
purity of unſullied innocence. How
much, then, has the guilty parent to
anſwer for, who, inſtead of ſetting a
fair example to his children, and di-
recting them in the paths of truth and
happineſs, miſleads their unwary foot-
ſteps into the paths of ſin and ſorrow;
who debauches thoſe morals, which he
ought to improve, and ſubjects thoſe to
the divine wrath, whom it is his in-
diſpenſable duty to ſhelter from it!

THOUGH many other cauſes, ariſing
from particular incidents in life, or from

SERM. III.

the different tempers and diſpoſitions of men, may occaſionally conſpire to diſturb the peace of families, by *provoking children to wrath*, thoſe which I have already mentioned, will generally be found the moſt prevalent: the beſt method, to guard againſt ſuch weakneſſes, and to prevent the ill conſequences of them is, probably, that rule of conduct, which the apoſtle hath preſcribed in the latter part of my text, admoniſhing parents, to *bring up their children in the nurture of the Lord.*

ST. *Paul*, who well knew how much depends on a virtuous and religious education, recommends it as the great and leading duty, including, as it were, and comprehending every other: he indeed, who regularly and conſcientiouſly performs this, will not often be found deficient in any of the reſt: it is ſcarce probable, that hew ho knows and teaches the principles of chriſtianity, ſhould himſelf

ſelf act ſo directly in oppoſition to them, as to *provoke his children to wrath*, by any of thoſe errors which I have above enumerated. It is not in the power of every man to provide for his children, with regard to the good things of this life, in the manner he could wiſh, or they, perhaps deſerve; his own circumſtances may be too narrow to make theirs eaſy; his own intereſt, merit, or abilities too ſmall and inconſiderable, to recommend them to powerful favour and protection; but, it is in every man's power to *bring up his children in the fear of the Lord*, to form their minds to the practice of virtue, and inſtil into them, as early as poſſible, the principles of religion and morality. SERM. III.

THIS is a duty which, I fear, is too often neglected amongſt us. The knowledge of languages, of arts and ſciences, is univerſally taught and inculcated

SERM. III.

with the utmoſt pains and aſſiduity; whilſt the nobleſt ſcience of all, that of Morality, the beſt and moſt uſeful knowledge, the knowledge of ourſelves, is ſeldom enquired into. Care is taken to fill the garden with every flower that can beautify or adorn, but ſcarce one uſeful fruit, or ſalutary herb, is planted in it: Children, in ſhort, are taught every language, but the language of the heart; inſtructed in every religion, but the religion of Chriſt; and acquainted with every book, but the holy ſcriptures.

PIETY ſtrengthens the bonds of filial, as well as of every other duty: thoſe children, therefore, will always be the moſt obedient, tender and affectionate, who act from conſcientious and religious principles. Thoſe, who have been *brought up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord*, will moſt probably repay their parents care and attention, by

love

love and gratitude towards them: it is therefore the father's higheſt intereſt, as well as his indiſpenſable duty, to inſtruct his children in religion; to acquaint them with the ways of God, to explain the doctrine of Chriſt, and the terms of ſalvation: as all the pains he takes in this taſk, will be amply recompenſed; and the gift, which he beſtows, be *returned fourfold into his own boſom.* SERM. III.

TO CONCLUDE, therefore, with the character of

A GOOD FATHER.

The *good Father* is ever humane, tender and affectionate to his children; he treats them, therefore, with lenity, and kindneſs,; corrects with prudence, rebukes with temper, and chaſtiſes with reluctance: he never ſuffers his indulgence to degenerate into weakneſs, or his

SERM. III. his affection to be biaſſed by partiality: as he rejoices in their joy, and participates in their afflictions, he never ſuffers them to want a bleſſing which he can beſtow, or to lament an evil which he can prevent: whilſt he continueth with them, he adminiſters to their preſent happineſs, and provides for their future felicity when he ſhall be removed from them; he is doubly cautious in preſerving his own character, becauſe theirs depends upon it; he is prudent, therefore, that they may be happy, induſtrious that they may be rich, good and virtuous, that they may be reſpected: he inſtructs by his life, and teaches by his example: as he is thoroughly ſatisfied, that piety is the ſource and foundation of every virtue, he takes care to *bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*: that they may be good *men*, he endeavours to make them good *chriſtians*; and after having done

done every thing in his power to make them easy and happy here, points out to them the only infallible means of securing eternal bliss and tranquility hereafter. SERM. III.

Now to God the Father, &c.

THE

THE DUTY OF SERVANTS TO MASTERS.

THE DUTY OF SERVANTS TO MASTERS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

SERMON IV.

DUTY TO MASTERS.

COLOSS. iii. 22.

Servants, obey in all things your maſters according to the fleſh: not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers, but in ſingleneſs of heart, fearing God.

HAVING endeavoured in my two laſt diſcourſes, to illuſtrate and explain to you, the great and important duties of father and ſon, which ſo deſervedly ſtand at the head of all our ſocial connections; and which are indeed, ſo interwoven, as it were, with our very frame and conſtitution, as to form no inconſiderable part, both

SERM. IV. of our merit and our happineſs, let us deſcend, as I propoſed, from the all-powerful ties of nature, to thoſe of an inferior kind; to thoſe, notwithſtanding, by which the wiſdom of God hath bound man to man, and which contribute to make us profitable and uſeful to each other. When we conſider the innumerable evils ariſing to ſociety, from the careleſſneſs and extravagance, or from the ſloth and negligence of ſervants, we cannot but acknowledge, that the due performance of their duty, in every particular, is a point of the utmoſt conſequence; that every method ſhould therefore be made uſe of to enforce, and every argument to recommend the practice of it; becauſe, in this large and complicated machine of the univerſe, if the ſmaller, or ſubordinate wheels, are out of order, it muſt of courſe, retard the motion, and interrupt the operations of the whole.

SERM. IV.

WE are all of us, doubtleſs, by nature equal, created after the ſame divine ſimilitude, made after the *image of God*, fellow-creatures and fellow-ſervants; all bound to obey the commands, and perform the ſovereign will of one great Lord and Maſter of us all. But the ſupreme Being, hath in his divine wiſdom, thought fit to make us, as the holy ſcripture expreſſes it, *members one of another*; without ſubordination, without order, rank and degree among men, the world would be a ſcene of anarchy and confuſion: beſides that, the various ſtations and circumſtances of human life calls forth the various powers and faculculties of men, and give them opportunities of exerciſing their ſeveral qualities and perfections. God, therefore, hath ſo ordained it, that ſome ſhall live upon the fruits of the earth, which the labour of others produceth, that in the great chain of nature, one link ſhall

ſupport

SERM. IV.

ſupport the other; and that whilſt it is given to ſome, to ſpend their time in eaſe and affluence, others ſhall live by the *ſweat of their brows*, ſhall bear the yoke of ſervitude, and be ſubject to the will and direction of their maſters. Nor doth this difference and diſtinction, in the leaſt, impeach the rectitude of the divine conduct; neither have we the leaſt right, or reaſon, to complain of partiality or injuſtice. It would be very eaſy to ſhew, that, as the higheſt and moſt exalted ſtations are attended with numberleſs pains and inconveniencies; the loweſt alſo is not without its ſhare of comfort and ſatisfaction: it would be no difficult taſk to convince the complaining ſervant, that the advantages of maintenance, ſupport, and protection, from an indulgent maſter, the eaſe and tranquillity which it is always in his own power to procure, and many other advantages ſufficiently obvious, are frequently an overballance

for

for the ſplendor of riches, and the dazzling luſtre of independency. — But ſince to complain in this caſe, is as abſurb as it is unjuſtifiable, becauſe it cannot poſſibly relieve the ſufferer; ſince it is the appointment of God, and therefore the duty of all, in patience and reſignation, to ſubmit to it, — Our time will be beſt employed in conſidering, if our lot has caſt us into the humble vale of life, how we may beſt behave ourſelves in it, perform the taſk which God hath impoſed upon us, and inſure to ourſelves, that reward of inheritance, which he hath promiſed to thoſe, who truly and faithfully diſcharge it.

AND herein the advice of the apoſtle, in my text, may ſerve us for a guide and director.

Servants, ſays he, *obey your maſters in all things*.

Now

SERM. IV.

Now, by the *Obedience* here expreſſed, how unlimited ſoever it may appear, we are not to underſtand, that a ſervant is obliged always to conform to the will and direction of his maſter, however unjuſt or unreaſonable: for, if what he commands, (as may, and perhaps, doth frequently happen) be in direct oppoſition to the laws of God, or of man, the partial obligation by which he is connected, doth by no means bind him to the performance of it: the laſt contract we make, will not annul that which was prior to it: the relations which we bear to each other, were ordained to ſtrengthen, and not to diſſolve, the more powerful ties of juſtice and morality: he, therefore, who, the better to perform the firſt, breaks through and infringes the latter, is altogether as wiſe as he, who ſhould endeavour to ſtrengthen the building, by undermining the foundation. In all caſes, therefore,

fore, where the ſervant's obedience in- SERM.
terferes with divine or human laws, it IV.
is not required. — But, on the other hand, wherever it is conſonant with reaſon and juſtice, it is to be paid with the utmoſt exactneſs: the will of the maſter is not, in matters indifferent, to be controverted or diſputed; the mind, as well as body, ſhould be pliant and flexible; opinions, if advanced at all, are to be tended with humility; and doubts, if propoſed at all, propoſed with deference and ſubmiſſion. — It may be, and perhaps is, every day alledged by thoſe who are continually repining at their condition, that nothing is ſo mean and unworthy, ſo wretched and contemptible, as to be entirely ſubſervient to the will of others, to have no freedom of judgment or deciſion of our own, but tamely and implicitly to reſign to the caprice of ſuch as are ſometimes no better than ourſelves: but it would well become thoſe who

SERM. IV.

make the complaint, to reflect, that this boaſted privilege, which they are ſo loth to be deprived of, is often attended with the moſt fatal and deſtructive conſequences; that thoſe who ſay and do all that they will, very ſeldom either ſay or do as they ought; that to be left to ourſelves, without conſtraint or controul, is ſo far from being a bleſſing, that it would be rather one of the greateſt misfortunes which we can poſſibly fall into; and that as proud and as willingas we all are to command, it is always more eaſy and more ſafe, very often even more pleaſant to obey.

BUT it is not, as the apoſtle informs us, a mere external obedience which will acquit us: *Serve your maſters*, ſays he, *not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers*. It is not ſufficient, that whilſt ſervants are under the immediate inſpection of their maſters, they ſhould behave with ſome degree of diligence and aſſiduity, but

but that they ſhould ſerve and oblige them with equal diligence when abſent: no eye but the eye of God can ſee every thing at all times, and in all places; it is impoſſible that any man, how careful and induſtrious ſoever he may be, can provide for every contingency, or ſee every thing executed which is neceſſary: he muſt depend in ſome meaſure, therefore, on the integrity of thoſe beneath him. Here then will commence the true teſt of obedience, and the marks of unfeigned attachment and ſincerity. SERM. IV.

MUTUAL truſt and confidence are the great bonds of ſociety, without which it cannot poſſibly ſubſiſt: when we have bound ourſelves, therefore, by ſolemn contract; when we have agreed, in return for the manifeſt benefits and advantages of daily ſupport and protection, to promote the intereſt and welfare of thoſe who thus ſupport and protect us, the obligation is, doubtleſs, of

SERM. IV.

double force, and the neglect of it infinitely more unpardonable, becauſe it adds fraud and treachery to rapine and injuſtice. He who deprives a ſtranger of his right, is a thief; but he who defrauds his maſter, is a traitor alſo; and though the lenity of human laws may inflict an equal puniſhment on both, they will certainly meet with very different treatment from the divine. Honeſty and integrity are the moſt eſſential perfections of a good ſervant; as on theſe the ſecurity of every man's right and property, muſt, in ſome meaſure, depend. Servants ſhould be extremely careful, not to ſecrete or embezzle the leaſt part of that which is entruſted to them; becauſe, when they have once brought themſelves, by ſpecious arguments, to believe that to defraud, or injure another, may be *ſometimes* lawful, they will ſoon be perſuaded that it is *always* ſo; and who will ſerve or defend thoſe, who have betrayed that confidence

fidence which was repoſed in them; who have ruined and deſtroyed, thoſe whom they had ſworn to guard and protect? SERM. IV.

BUT it is further incumbent on every good ſervant, not only to be juſt, honeſt, and upright himſelf, but to take care, as far as in him lies, that others are juſt alſo: not to ſuffer his maſter, at any time, to be injured or defrauded. Men, frequently cheat themſelves into an opinion, that they are not anſwerable for the wickedneſs which they connive at; and, that they can only ſuffer for what they commit; but, it is a miſerable and fatal ſelf-deluſion; a deluſion, which will ruin their fame, character, and intereſt here; and withal, greatly endanger the ſafety of their ſouls hereafter. For in the caſe now before us, as well as innumerable other inſtances which might be mentioned, that ſervant, who ſees his maſter robbed, or betrayed; who hears him calumniated, and abuſed, and is ſo mean,

SERM. IV.

mean, ſo timid and ungrateful, as to paſs it over unnoticed, and unreſented, but ill deſerves that protection and reward which he receives from him. There is not the leaſt doubt to be made, but that, in theſe circumſtances, to be ſilent is to be guilty, and he who conceals the crime, is in ſome meaſure acceſſary to it.

BUT another branch of the ſervant's obedience, and without which he cannot indeed, properly, deſerve the name of one, is diligence; and the want of this is moſt inexcuſable; becauſe it is a perfection which it is in the power of all to attain; and it requires nothing but a willing mind to the performance of it; it is of the utmoſt ſervice and aſſiſtance to parts and genius where they *are*, and in a great meaſure ſupplies their place where they are *not*: it is, after all, but a ſpecies of the duty I juſt now mentioned, of uprightneſs and integrity; for he who is not induſtrious, is not honeſt;

and

and to be diligent, is only to be juſt. SERM. IV.
the maſter has as good a right to the labour, time, and aſſiduity of the ſervant, as the ſervant can poſſibly have to the ſupport, protection and wages of his maſter: If the latter, therefore, performs his part of the contract, the former cannot, without the utmoſt injuſtice, with-hold the other: he ſhould place himſelf in the circumſtances and ſituation, then, of his maſter; he ſhould give the ſame induſtry, and aſſiduity to his affairs, as if they were his own: his own, in reality, they moſt certainly are; becauſe, on the ſucceſs and fortune of the one, the eaſe and maintenance of the other muſt depend: and yet, what dreadful conſequences have ariſen to the beſt of men, from the ill conduct and behaviour of thoſe whom they had hired to ruin and betray them! Such inconſiſtent judges are we of what is truly valuable in this life, that where we promiſe ourſelves the greateſt pleaſure, we often

SERM. IV. often meet with the bittereſt diſappointment; and what flattered us with the faireſt proſpect, brings with it the greateſt trouble and anxiety. To make a ſplendid appearance, to boaſt a numerous retinue, to have a croud of vaſſals attendant on our pleaſure, and ſubſervient to our commands, may ſooth the pride and vanity of our hearts; but doth it not often happen, that theſe are treaſures which we pay very dearly for? that our ſervants ruin and betray us? that their negligence deſtroys, their diſhoneſty undermines, their extravagance ruins their maſters? and thus the very thing which cauſed the envy, is that which moſt deſerves the pity of onr inferiors.

But the apoſtle, in the latter part of my text, has recommended a virtue, which would prevent all theſe evils, and promote every good; he has recommended a perfection which will ſtrengthen and cement all the reſt; and that is,

ſingleneſs

ſingleneſs of heart, a pious conſcientious regard to the engagement we have entered into: *Whatever ye do*, ſays he, *do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.* Whatſoever we do heartily, we ſhall always do effectually. Servants, therefore ſhould endeavour to inculcate in themſelves, a deſire of pleaſing and obliging; they ſhould create, as it were, a tenderneſs and affection for thoſe whom they ſerve. SERM. IV.

LOVE is, indeed, the life and ſoul of every relative duty; the powerful enlivening principle, which alone can inſpire us with vigour and activity in the execution of it: without this, even diligence is ungrateful, and ſubmiſſion itſelf has the air of diſobedience; a cold, languid, ſpiritleſs compliance with the will of another ſeems forced and extorted, and when thoſe whom we expect to follow us through life muſt, be dragged after us, it retards our pro-

SERM. IV.

greſs, and at the ſame time takes off half the pleaſure of the journey. But, on the other hand, when reciprocal truſt and confidence, have produced mutual love and affection, every thing flows on in an eaſy, uninterrupted courſe of joy and ſatisfaction; pleaſure and duty go hand in hand, *righteouſneſs and peace kiſs each other:* every wiſh on each ſide is prevented, and every jealouſy removed; the maſter's will is known before it is expreſſed, and the ſervice performed even before it is commanded.

THUS good, thus profitable, and thus happy, are they who act from *ſingleneſs of heart, fearing God.* The *fear of God,* in this, as in every thing elſe, *is the beginning of wiſdom.* Thoſe ſervants, indeed, who wrong or betray, who injure or neglect their maſters, have reaſon to fear that God whom they have offended; becauſe, when we are deficient in any of thoſe duties which we owe

owe to our neighbour, we tranſgreſs the laws of the moſt High: in all our relations and connections with each other, God is the witneſs to every contract, and muſt know whether we perform it or not: he is the great guardian of the rights and privileges of all mankind; he ſits on the ſeat to *do judgment and juſtice*; and when any are oppreſſed or injured here, to him they muſt appeal for redreſs; if the ſervant, therefore, wrong his maſter; if he is diſhoneſt, ſlothful, idle and extravagant, God will avenge the cauſe of the injured, and caſt *the unprofitable ſervant into utter darkneſs, where ſhall be weeping and wailing and gnaſhing of teeth*. Whilſt, on the other hand, if the ſervant obey his maſter in all things with *ſingleneſs of heart, fearing God*; if he is honeſt, faithful, diligent and grateful, he ſhall, as the apoſtle ſays, *receive the inheritance*. It is the happineſs of ſervants, and ought with gratitude to be remembered by them, that

SERM. IV.

SERM. IV.

they have better and more frequent opportunities of recommending themſelves to God than their ſuperiors. Honeſty, frugality, temperance, faithfulneſs and humility, thoſe truly chriſtian virtues, which they are called on, every day, to exerciſe, are more particularly adapted to their ſtation and circumſtances in life; what we cannot eaſily ſubſiſt without, we are readily induced to acquire; is it not then, a pecnliar privilege which ſervants enjoy, that what is their duty is, moſt apparently, their intereſt alſo; and that which conſtitutes their preſent happineſs, will, at the ſame time, enſure their future felicity?

To ſum up all, therefore, in the character of

A GOOD SERVANT.

THE *good ſervant* will *obey his maſter in all things*; will readily and implicitly ſubmit

ſubmit to his commands, without mur- SERM.
muring or reluctance; will execute them IV.
with zeal, chearfulneſs and alacrity;
will be ſtrictly honeſt, juſt and faithful,
with regard to every thing committed
to his care; endeavouring to promote
in others that fidelity, which he doth
himſelf practice; and to diſſuade them
from that fraud of corruption, which he
doth himſelf abhor: he will be too ac-
tive and vigilant in the diſcharge of his
duty, to ſtand in need of any admoni-
tions to the performance, or any re-
proaches for the omiſſion of it; he will
inſenſibly contract an eſteem and regard
for thoſe whom he ſerves, which will
naturally grow up into the tendereſt re-
gard and affection for them; ſo that
his labour will become the labour of
love, and his ſervice perfect freedom:
he will conſider himſelf bound by the
laws of God, as well as by the laws of
men, to the punctual diſcharge of that
relation which he hath entered into; not
merely

SERM. IV. merely as a civil, but as a moral and religious obligation: he will not, therefore, content himſelf with eye-ſervice, but, at all times, be diligent and aſſiduous, as conſcious, that he hath not only an earthly, but an heavenly Maſter, who knoweth every word and every action; who *ſeeth in ſecret*, and will one day, either puniſh or *reward him openly*.

TO CONCLUDE, therefore—

A TIME, we know, will come, (and it cannot be far from every one of us) when we muſt, all once more, be upon a level; when all rank and degree ſhall ceaſe, and all diſtinctions vaniſh: in the grave we ſhall be equal; where *the wicked ceaſe from troubling*, and the *weary are at reſt*; *where the priſoners reſt together, and hear not the voice of the oppreſſor*: from that place, he that created all, ſhall call forth his creatures, *high and low, rich and poor one with another*: they ſhall the *ſervant be a ſervant no more*;

more; God, the great deliverer, , ſhall ſhake off his chains, and break his bonds in ſunder: then ſhall thoſe, whoſe low and hard condition in this life, ſubjected them to toil and labour, receive the reward of reſt and tranquility: — if they have performed their duty in that ſtation which God alloted them, they ſhall receive the inheritance which he hath promiſed them: they who have groaned under the hand of tyranny and oppreſſion, ſhall enjoy the bleſſings of freedom and indulgence, and thoſe who have been the ſervants of men, ſhall become the ſons of God; they ſhall become the ſervants of that beſt and kindeſt Maſter, who will lay no harſh commands upon them, require no unpleaſing or unreaſonable ſervice; but, inſtead of burthening them with new taſks, will only recompence them for what they have already performed; a Maſter, who, when they approach his throne with humility, will receive them with the kindeſt

SERM. IV. kindeſt ſalutation, and with the tendereſt endearments; who will crown all their wiſhes, and ſatisfy all their deſires, when he ſhall ſay unto them: *Well have ye done, my good and faithful ſervants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.*

Now to God the Father, &c.

THE

THE DUTY OF MASTERS TO SERVANTS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

SERMON V.

DUTY TO SERVANTS.

COLOSS. IV. 1.

Maſters, give unto your ſervants that which is juſt and equal, knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in heaven.

THE gracious providence of God, exerted conſtantly and invariably towards mankind, is not in any thing more immediately viſible, than in that very part of the divine conduct to which the fooliſh unbeliever hath the ſtrongeſt objection. The unequal diſtribution of things in this ſhort and tranſitory life, the great power, riches and abundance, happineſs, knowledge and

SERM. V.

capacity of ſome, the no leſs diſtinguiſhed weakneſs, indigence, poverty and ignorance of others, were ſo ordained, no doubt, by the creator of all, to ſet in motion the various qualities and perfections of our nature; to teach us, that we were born to ſerve and love one another; to employ our health, ſtrength and plenty, for the ſupport and comfort of the weak, the ſick, and the neceſſitous. To ſome, therefore, he hath appointed their ſtation in the humble vale of ſubmiſſion and dependency, put upon them the yoke of ſervitude, and ſubjected them to the will of their ſuperiors: others, at the ſame time, he hath thought fit to exalt to rank, fortune and precedency; to give them rule over their brethren; to endow them with power and abundance: but, in return for this power and authority, for the good things of life, which he hath thus graciouſly beſtowed on the great, our Maſter, which is in heaven, expects that we, on our part, ſhould take care

care of our ſervants upon earth; that we ſhould give them all things that are *juſt and equal.* SERM. V.

BY *juſt and equal*, we are, doubtleſs, to underſtand all the various parts of a maſter's duty to his ſervant which circumſtance, merit, or occaſion may at any time require of him: in theſe words, therefore, are comprehended and implied, not only juſtice in the ſtrict and limited ſenſe, but maintenance and protection, indulgence and tenderneſs, advice and inſtruction, pardon and forgiveneſs.

NOTHING can be more ſelf-evident, than that thoſe who contribute, in a great meaſure, to our eaſe and happineſs, have an indiſputable title to a reward from us. Amongſt wild and barbarous nations, where power is gained and ſupported by mere force and brutality, men may

SERM. V. may exerciſe a ſavage anthority over their ſlaves and vaſſals, without conſidering themſelves bound to any grateful return for their toils and ſervice; but in the more refined parts of the world, at all times, and in all nations, the obligations of maſter and ſervant, have been conſidered as mutual; it is a cloſe and intimate relation, a ſolemn engagement entered into by them both, and which both are equally bound to diſcharge. The firſt great duty, therefore, incumbent on maſters is, ſtrictly and punctually to abide by their contract, and to reward the ſervant for his labour, according to the agreements made between them: and yet, even this common act of juſtice and humanity is not always performed; though it cannot be with-held from them without the moſt flagrant and glaring impiety. Thus far we are bound by the common ties of equity, which bind man to man, and

without

without which, ſociety indeed, cannot ſubſiſt. SERM. V.

BUT by giving unto our ſervants, what is *juſt and equal*, the apoſtle, undoubtedly, implied ſomething more than the ſtrict performance of this mutual contract. To juſtice, we muſt add benevolence alſo. Thoſe who enter into a ſtate of ſervitude, are generally poor and deſtitute; they have no friends able to ſupport or protect them, and, therefore, have recourſe to a maſter: to him they fly, as to an aſylum, from the injuries and oppreſſions of a cruel world: they are driven, as it were, into this harbour, by the ſtorms and tempeſts of human life, which beat hard upon them, and force them in for immediate ſhelter and preſervation: we cannot, therefore, in ſuch diſtreſsful circumſtances, refuſe our aſſiſtance to them; if they are faithful and diligent in the diſcharge of their office,

we

SERM. V. we are, in ſome meaſure, indebted to them for their care and fidelity.

IN all civilized countries, as well as in our own, the ſervants of the public are taken care of by the public: thoſe who have ſpent their lives in the ſervice of the ſtate, and been uſeful to the commonweal in their youth, are maintained and ſupported by it in their age. The ſame reaſon ſhould, doubtleſs, hold good with regard to the private ſervice of individuals; and we are bound to preſerve and ſupport thoſe who have long faithfully diſcharged their duty to us. The fidelity, carefulneſs and ſobriety of a good ſervant, hath often reſtored thoſe fortunes which have been well nigh diſſipated by much nearer relations; and where one hath performed that duty, which the other hath totally neglected, he is moſt certainly intitled to the greater reward.

SERM. V.

BUT, moreover, it often happens, that thoſe are reduced to a ſtate of penury and ſervitude, who have lived in eaſe and affluence, and that ſuch as have been long uſed to command, are forced to obey: theſe, no doubt, both call for and deſerve a more than ordinary tenderneſs, and peculiar delicacy of behaviour towards them; we ſhould lay the burthen of labour in ſuch a manner, as to make them leaſt ſenſible of it, and, if we cannot raiſe them to what they were, we ſhould degrade ourſelves, as it were, to what they have been: we all of us experience, ſome time or other, how irkſome and diſagreeable it is to be ſubſervient to the will of others: when even the rich and great, therefore, are forced to pay homage to their ſuperiors, the uneaſineſs which they feel on the occaſion ſhould be an uſeful leſſon of inſtruction, and teach them to behave with humanity and good nature towards

SERM. V. those beneath them. There is always a lively ſenſibility which attends the indigent and miſerable, and more eſpecially thoſe who have ſeen better days, which awakens them to the quickeſt reſentment; they are often jealous of an injury where it is not meant, and ſhrink under the wound even before it is given. When haughty and imperious maſters, therefore, behave with inſolence, and ſpeak with contempt of their ſervants, it is both unjuſt and inhuman, becauſe it is imputing that to them as a crime, which ſhould be pitied as a misfortune; and to reproach them for being unhappy, is, in effect, to make them ſo. The unmanly and ungenerous treatment of our inferiors is, doubtleſs, the mark of a mind, as weak, as it muſt be wicked; for, to inſult thoſe who cannot return the inſult, is cowardice; and it is the heighth of folly to triumph, where there is no glory in the conqueſt.

SERVI-

SERM. V.

SERVITUDE is, ſurely, by no means eligible; it hath miſeries and inconveniences ſufficient, even in its beſt condition; how then, can we embitter that draught which is already ſo nauſeous and unpalatable? ſhall we not have compaſſion on our fellow-creatures? ſhall we not endeavour to make their *yoke eaſy, and their burthen light?* A kind and tender behaviour to ſervants will, above all things, moſt enſure their fidelity, and endear us to them; the ſoft voice of good-nature and affability, will be heard much farther by the ear of gratitude, than the loud and tumultuous clamour of pride and ſelf-ſufficiency: it is not ſo much what maſters oblige their ſervants to do, as the manner in which they oblige them to do it; it is not ſo much what they ſpeak, as the manner in which it is ſpoken; which, for the moſt part, gives the greateſt joy or ſorrow: a harſh and diſagreeable method

SERM. V. of expreſſing ourſelves, will make the eaſieſt taſk ſeem burthenſome and oppreſſive; whilſt, on the other hand, he who orders with lenity and mildneſs, is obeyed with chearfulneſs and alacrity, and the command hath the air of a requeſt: thus, he who lays it, preſerves the power and authority of a maſter, and yet is ſerved with all the zeal and affection of a friend.

BUT, as the ſervant hath a right to ſome degree of tenderneſs and indulgence, ſo hath he alſo, to pardon and forgiveneſs.

WE are all of us liable to errors, both of judgment and of will: if we expect to be pardoned for them ourſelves, we ſhould alſo forgive thoſe who commit them againſt us. Servants may err from ignorance and inadvertency, they may even commit a fault, where they meant to perform a duty; their ignorance, there-

therefore, is to be paſſed over, and their inadvertency excuſed. We ſhould remember, when ſervants offend, the example of our Saviour and maſter Jeſus Chriſt: when his liſtleſs and indolent diſciples, careleſs of their maſter's approaching fate, and in contempt of his expreſs command, fell aſleep, with what humanity doth he chide, and with what tenderneſs reprove them! *Could ye not watch with me*, ſays he, *one hour? But ſleep on, and take your reſt.* They were without excuſe, and he kindly puts one into their mouths: *the ſpirit*, ſaid he, *is willing, but the fleſh is weak.* Was not this the beſt method to rouſe their attention, and alarm them to a proper ſenſe of their duty? could ſervants refuſe, after this, to live and die for ſuch a Maſter?

SERM. V.

BUT beſides this tenderneſs and indulgence, this maintenance and protection, this pardon and forgiveneſs, the

ſervant

SERM. V. servant is intituled also, from the pious and christian master, to his frequent advice and instruction.

THOSE who in their earlier years have been oppressed by want and penury, are seldom blest with the advantages of a good and liberal education; their ideas are confined in a very narrow circle, their minds often biassed towards evil, by habit and custom, and kept in total ignorance and darkness, from the want of opportunities to improve: a master, therefore, if he hath leisure and capacity, should endeavour to open and enlighten them, he should teach them their duty, both towards God and towards man; instruct them in that religion, which he himself professeth; and explain those doctrines by which he regulates his own conduct and behaviour. And that he may the better perform this important task, his advice must be strengthened by his life, and his precepts enforced

enforced by his example. It becometh all men no doubt, and above all men it becometh chriſtians, to be cautious and prudent in their behaviour; to attend the houſe of God, and perform every act of piety and devotion, with that decency and ſolemnity which they require; but, to the maſter of a family, theſe obligations are, every one of them, more cogent and more binding. When a man hath once taken upon him this important office (for ſo it is) the circle of his duties is then enlarged, and extends itſelf on every ſide: it is then incumbent on him, to let no bad examples, much leſs his own, influence the lives and manners of thoſe he is placed over: he is the chief actuating ſpring which is to direct the whole machine: he is the head, and when that is out of order, the members will no longer perform their office, and all the frame is in immediate danger of diſſolution: he is to be a pattern to them in every word and work: he,

SERM. V.

SERM. V. he, therefore, ſhould be careful, that not a word paſs his lips, which is immodeſt or profane, idle or ridiculous; that not an action be attributed to him that is evil, leaſt they call in his wickedneſs to countenance their folly, his authority and example to give a ſanction to their guilt.

WHEN ſervants ſee their maſters living in a continued ſcene of riot, madneſs and debauchery, in open contempt and defiance of God's laws, is it probable, that they themſelves, ſhould any longer pay the leaſt regard to them? will they give ear to thoſe doctrines which their maſters contemn, that religion which they deſpiſe, or that redeemer which they ridicule and ſcoff at?

NOTHING, I believe, hath ſo much tended to the corruption and depravity of the age we live in, as the bad examples of the rich and great amongſt us: vice

vice had, perhaps, as many followers in the days of our forefathers as in our own, but then it muſt be acknowledged, they did not enter ſo publicly and openly into her ſervice: the rich and powerful, were at all times, and in all ages, licentious and extravagant; but they, had the modeſty, at leaſt, to avoid the appearance of it. SERM. V.

WHAT the effects of a conduct directly oppoſite to this, muſt inevitably be, we need not foretel; but certain it is, that the bad example of the great, hath ſo far influenced their inferiors, that the follies, which once confined themſelves to courts and palaces, are to be found even in the cottages of the poor, and the majority of ſervants are almoſt as vicious as their maſters.

Let thoſe who thus deſpiſe the apoſtle's advice in the former part of my text, remember what he makes men-

SERM. V.

tion of in the latter; let them reflect and know, that *they alſo have a maſter in heaven*: they who acknowledge none upon earth, will find one there; *knowing*, ſays the apoſtle, *that ye alſo have a maſter in heaven.*

EQUALITY of circumſtance and condition, doth naturally, and of neceſſity, produce ſome degree of love and attention: the ſick have compaſſion for the ſick, the old have tenderneſs for the old, the poor man is melted by the tears of indigence; and he, who hath any diſtreſs or calamity of his own, has generally a heart to feel for the diſtreſſes and calamities of others. The ſureſt method, therefore, of becoming good, humane and tender maſters to our ſervants is, to reflect that we alſo, *are ſervants* ourſelves; that we have all our allotted portions of toil and labour, our various ſervices which we are bound to perform; that our behaviour to thoſe beneath

beneath us, is amongſt thoſe ſervices; and that it is, indeed, no inconſiderable part of our duty towards our great Lord and Maſter: *with the ſame meaſure that we mete withal, it ſhall be meaſured to us again.* If we are kind and indulgent to our ſervants, God will be ſo to us; if we paſs over their failings, excuſe their ignorance, palliate their weakneſs, and pardon their inadvertencies, he alſo, *will not be extreme to mark* when we *do amiſs*; he will conſider our infirmities, forgive our follies, pity, aſſiſt and remove our ignorance. But, on the other hand, we are to remember, that if *we have a maſter in heaven*, he is a maſter to puniſh, as well as to reward: that he is not like earthly maſters, to be impoſed upon or deluded; that he will have the ſervice of the whole heart; no partial, imperfect, inſincere obedience, but an abſolute, ready, vigilant compliance with all his commands, which are not, cannot be like our own, harſh,

SERM. V.

SERM. V. harſh, impracticable or unreaſonable, but ſuch as becomes an all-wiſe and gracious ſovereign to lay upon us.

HAVING explained and illuſtrated, therefore, the ſeveral duties of a maſter recommended in the text, I cannot conclude better, than in uniting them all in a brief deſcription of

A GOOD MASTER.

THE *good maſter* then, is one who, as St. Paul ſays, *gives unto his ſervant that which is juſt and equal:* one, who from a conſcientious regard to his duty, and in obedience to the divine will, is reſolved to diſcharge and fulfil them in this, as well as every other particular; one, who conſiders his ſervant not, as many do, as a being of an inferior rank and ſpecies, ſent into the world merely to be ſubſervient to his commands, and born only to perform them

them, and whom, therefore, he hath a right to treat as he thinks moſt proper and convenient, but as a creature of the ſame rank and dignity with himſelf, made after the ſame divine image; as one who, though not ſo conſiderable, is yet perhaps an equally uſeful member of ſociety, to whom providence hath appointed an humbler, ſtation in this life; one, whom he hath entered into ſolemn contract and agreement with, for the reciprocal preſervation of their mutual peace and happineſs: as ſuch, therefore, he pays with the utmoſt ſtrictneſs and punctuality, whatever is due to him for his labour and ſervitude. But moreover, whilſt he is engaged in this labour and ſervice, the good maſter thinks it his indiſpenſible duty to ſupport and protect him: he will not ſuffer any other to exerciſe that power and authority over him, which he only hath a right to, much leſs to inſult or oppreſs him: the good maſter will, now and then in-

SERM. V. indulge his ſervant in ſome remiſſion and relaxation; he will ſlacken a little, the reins of government, looſen the bonds of ſervitude, and make him as eaſy and contented as his condition will permit; if he offends from ignorance, he will rather endeavour to remove than to reſent it; if from inadvertency, he will pardon; if, even, from the worſt of cauſes, he will ſometimes, nay, even frequently, forgive him. Beſides this, the good, that is, the conſcientious and pious maſter, will look upon himſelf bound, as a chriſtian, to guide, inſtruct and admoniſh his ſervants, to guide them by his wiſdom, to admoniſh them by his knowledge, to inſtruct them by his example: he will ſhew that he is fit to rule over others by the command which he hath of his own paſſions, and keep the nobleſt ſuperiority over his ſervants, the ſuperiority of virtue.

LASTLY,

LASTLY, the good maſter will conſider his ſervants as fellow-creatures, and fellow-ſervants, and treat them as ſuch, as *brethren by adoption*, the ſons of one common father, and joint inheritors of the kingdom of God; he will remember, that *he alſo hath a maſter in heaven:* he will conſider, therefore, that as he acts towards his inferiors, God will act towards him: that a day will come, when all muſt be upon a level, and the ſervant ſhall be equal to his maſter: that in that day, if he hath behaved with tenderneſs and humanity, he ſhall meet and embrace him as a friend; and they ſhall join like friends and brethren, in humble adoration of the great Lord, Creator, Father, and Maſter of them both.

To whom, &c.

THE

THE DUTY OF WIVES TO HUSBANDS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

SERMON VI.

DUTY TO HUSBANDS.

EPHES. V. 33.

Let every one of you love his wife even as himſelf, and the wife ſee that ſhe reverence her huſband.

HAVING endeavoured to enforce and recommend the ſeveral inferior duties of child and father, ſervant and maſter, I come now to conſider the great parent root from whence theſe branches originally proceed, the fountain and foundation of them, that cloſe and intimate connection which gives riſe to all the reſt, the duties of huſband and wife, thoſe ſacred and indiſ-

SERM. VI.

SERM. VI. ſoluble ties, which conſtitute the happineſs or miſery of the greateſt part of the Chriſtian world.

IT may not be amiſs, before I proceed to the conſideration of this ſubject, to remark, that marriage is one of thoſe things, which, however lightly it may be eſteemed, or ſpoken of, by the gay and diſſolute; is, notwithſtanding, a matter of the utmoſt conſequence and importance, as the welfare of ſociety in general, together with the eaſe and happineſs of individuals, doth in a great meaſure depend upon it: I cannot, therefore, but be of opinion, that the unbounded freedom of ſpeech, the unwearied endeavours of licenc'd ridicule, with which it is ſo familiarly and ſo univerſally treated, hath greatly contributed to the frequent contempt of this duty on each ſide, and the no leſs frequent violation of it of late years ſo viſible amongſt us. Let us endeavour, then

then to reſcue it from the hands of libertines, and the mouth of the ſcoffer. And to this end, I propoſe to point out to you, the ſeveral parts of this reciprocal duty, and to recommend thoſe virtues which are more immediately neceſſary towards the performance of it. SERM. VI.

Let every one of you, ſays St. Paul, *ſo love his wife even as himſelf, and the wife ſee that ſhe reverence her huſband.*

Under the two leading and eſſential points, which are here mentioned by the holy apoſtle, we may fairly comprehend all thoſe duties, that are requiſite to make the marriage ſtate eaſy and happy: love and affection will naturally produce tenderneſs and fidelity; and reverence will as conſtantly and invariably be attended with humility, prudence and devotion; and wherever theſe unite, they cannot fail to conſtitute mutual and laſting felicity.

As

SERM. VI.

As in the preceding diſcourſes I have begun with the inferior duty, I ſhall proceed in the ſame manner with regard to the ſubject under our preſent conſideration, and endeavour to point out to you, wherein the duty of a wife to her huſband, doth principally conſiſt.

THE wife, then, ſhould be faithful and conſtant, humble and obedient, prudent and diſcreet, tender and kind, affectionate and pious.

THE ſovereign virtue requiſite in the married ſtate, is FIDELITY, without which it cannot ſubſiſt: no perfections or qualities whatever, can make amends for the want of it; no excuſes whatever can be admitted to palliate the leaſt departure from it: both parties are bound in the moſt ſolemn manner, to maintain and preſerve it inviolable, and the infringement of it will render them obnoxious

noxious to the reſentment both of God and man: the neceſſity is, in truth, ſo ſelf-evident, that I ſhall dwell no further on it at preſent, than to obſerve, that the neglect of it on the part of the wife is always attended with more fatal and deſtructive conſequences than on the part of the huſband; becauſe, ſhe is the guardiau of his honour as well as her own; becauſe, he ſuffers for her guilt, and is puniſhed for her iniquity. SERM. VI.

A virtuous woman, ſays Solomon, *is a crown to her huſband, but ſhe that maketh aſhamed, is as rottenneſs in his bones.* It is to be hoped, that in a Chriſtian country, there are not many inſtances to be found of conjugal falſehood and infidelity. I ſhall not at preſent, therefore, dwell on this point, but proceed to that moſt neceſſary and eſſential duty of a wife, OBEDIENCE.

SOCIETY,

SERM. VI.

SOCIETY, we know, cannot poſſibly ſubſiſt without ſubordination: ſtates and kingdoms can never flouriſh or increaſe, unleſs ſome preſide at the helm, to guide and direct, whilſt others follow and obey; without a head, the members cannot perform their offices: without ſome ruling hand, inveſted with power and authority to govern, puniſh or reward, there can be nothing but anarchy and confuſion: and the ſame is equally neceſſary, in all private connections: ſuperior power muſt be lodged in one hand, and the only doubt that can ariſe, if any doubt there be, is, to whom that power doth of right belong.

THE words of the apoſtle with regard to this, are very plain and explicit. *The huſband*, ſays he, *is the head of the wife. Man was not of the woman, but the woman of the man.* Priority of birth, at their original formation, ſeeming to imply

ply and point out the precedency: but there is withal a reaſon which carries with it the higheſt conviction, and that is, the viſible ſuperiority of one ſex over the other, ſo manifeſt in the abilities both of mind and body. SERM. VI.

ARGREEABLE to the dictates of reaſon in this reſpect, as indeed in all others, are the dictates of religion. Obedience of wives is the commandment of God himſelf; *Thy deſire ſhall be to thy huſband*, ſays he, *he ſhall rule over thee. Wives ſubmit yourſelves*, ſays St. Paul, *to your huſbands, as unto the Lord:* that is, be aſſured that duty towards your huſband is part of your duty towards God; that when you love the one, you pleaſe the other; when you diſobey the one, you offend the other: you are bound to obedience not only by the promiſe made to your huſband, but by a ſtill more ſolemn engagement, by a promiſe made to the Almighty. God is not only a

SERM. VI.

witneſs of the contract, but a part in it; he hath claim to a ſhare in every connection, duty and relation, we enter into: the huſband cannot releaſe the wife, nor the wife the huſband; the ſervant his maſter, nor the maſter his ſervant; the father the ſon, nor the ſon his father from the punctual diſcharge of them, without his divine conſent and approbation: and though in regard to individuals, it may ſo happen, that the direct contrary to what hath been advanced may be indiſputably true, no argument can thence be drawn againſt the general concluſion.

The ſon may, and frequently hath a larger portion of parts and underſtanding than his father, and ſervants better genius, ſenſe and capacity than their maſters; and yet it muſt be acknowledged, that this, in either caſe would be a poor plea for their rebellion and diſobedience.

HALF

HALF the miſeries of mankind ariſe from pride and ſelf-love; from that vain conceit we are ſo apt to entertain of ourſelves, and of our own abilities.

The good and prudent wife, who is ſatisfied of that natural ſuperiority of man, which I have juſt now mentioned, will conſider, that in caſes of importance, the huſband's knowledge and experience ſhould make him a better judge than her; and therefore ſhe ſhould ſubmit, and in matters of little or no conſequence it is ſurely ſcarce worth while to diſpute about them. If diſputes however, do ariſe, mutual good nature and condeſcenſion will prevent acrimony, bitterneſs and anger. Let the end propoſed therefore in all be truth and not victory, and the deſire of both to convince, and not to conquer.

SERM. VI.

To obedience therefore ſhould alſo be added quietneſsand HUMILITY. The virtues of a woman were not meant to glare in the dazzling luſtre of public buſineſs, but are caſt as it were into the ſhades of life, in the mild majeſty of private, ſocial, domeſtic happineſs.

Let women adorn themſelves, ſays St. Paul, *in modeſt apparel, with ſhame-facedneſs and ſobriety, not with broidered hair or gold, or pearls, or coſtly array; for I ſuffer not a woman to teach nor to uſurp authority over the man, but to be in ſilence.* Silence indeed is for the moſt part apter to perſuade than argument; when the ſtorm meets with reſiſtance, it is generally the moſt violent; and the tender plant which bends beneath the blaſt, is much ſafer than the lofty oak which ſeems to defy it. After all, it is the wife's intereſt as well as duty, to be in ſubjection to her huſband; becauſe ſhe who moſt

moſt eaſily complies with his will, is, for the moſt part indulged in her own; and ſhe hath the moſt frequent opportunities to command, who is moſt ready and moſt willing to obey. A meek and quiet ſpirit, we know, is with God of the higheſt value. It may indeed happen, and frequently doth, that this meek and quiet ſpirit ſhall but provoke a moroſe and ſurly temper to greater inſults; and that the coward who finds no reſiſtance, will repeat the blow. But to thoſe notwithſtanding who have humility, there is this conſolation ſtill behind, that however man may deſpiſe the jewel, God who knows its value will hold it of great price. A thouſand teſtimonies of conjugal fidelity, love, tenderneſs, affection, and forgiveneſs, may eſcape the eye of a vicious or of an indifferent huſband, unknown and unregarded: but that eye which ſeeth and knoweth all things will obſerve them: and what is ſtill more to be wiſhed and deſired, we

SERM. VI.

we may be certain, that wherever he ſees virtue, he muſt approve it; and wherever he approves, he is ſure to reward.

PROCEED we then to the next eſſential quality of a good wife, DISCRETION. Conqueſts acquired by force, are maintained by policy; and the hearts which love hath ſubdued, muſt be preſerved by prudence: the dominion of youth and beauty is arbitrary and deſpotic, but like other tyrannies ſeldom of any long duration. Prudence therefore, that faithful miniſter, muſt be called in to ſubdue the rebel paſſions, maintain a due ballance and proportion, and keep the ſovereign on the throne. Whilſt tender years and inexperience palliate every error, and excuſe every inadvertency, prudence is not perhaps ſo immediately neceſſary; but when women have paſt that favourable indulgent ſeaſon, and have entered into a ſituation

tuation which calls for the exerciſe of this virtue every hour, it then becomes abſolutely and really indiſpenſible; and the want of it is as inexcuſable as it is fatal and deſtructive; and yet I know not how it is, but almoſt every other virtue is more frequently to be met with. At that time of life when we moſt ſtand in need of it, it is ſeldom ſeen, and doth not make its appearance till it can be of little ſervice to us: To wives, we know, it often comes when its powers are languid and ineffectual, the affection of the huſband is already eſtranged by infidelity, changed by indifference, or decayed by ingratitude, diſcretion ſteps in at laſt to regain it; like an able phyſician, it is not called till the laſt gaſp, when it is much too late to ſave the patient. SERM. VI.

NOTHING is in reality ſo unſuitable to the dignity, ſo unbecoming the character of a good and virtuous wife, as that

that indiſcreet careleſsneſs and levity of behaviour which has of late years crept in amongſt us. The taſte of pleaſure and diverſions is grown ſo univerſal, that family duties, and family decency and decorum alſo are greatly neglected. The old and the young, the married and the ſingle, are ſo blended together in the general maſs of folly; the carriage, manners and behaviour of all are ſo equally gay and diſſolute, that they ſet the examples of vice, whoſe duty it is to keep others from it; and ſcarce any thing is left to diſtinguiſh the matron from her daughter, but the wrinkles which ſhe cannot hide, and the years which ſhe cannot conceal.

When one ſex thus forget ſtation, rank, and circumſtance, can we be ſurpriſed to find the other unwilling to remember it? when women no longer behave themſelves as wives, do they deſire, or can they expect to be treated as

as ſuch? Whilſt there is a deſire in every geſture, word and action to pleaſe, all indiſcriminately, can we ſuppoſe there is a ſtrong or powerful attachment to any individual? Let thoſe, therefore, who follow a giddy, thoughtleſs multitude, through the perpetual round of faſhionable follies, remember, that amuſement is no longer innocent when it interferes with duty; that example can only countenance that guilt which it doth not extenuate, and that public pleaſure is dearly bought which is purchaſed at the expence of private happineſs. SERM. VI.

WOMEN, as well as men, are bound by the religion of Chriſt, not only to avoid vice, but the appearance of it: not only to be virtuous, but to ſeem ſo; beſides that, their reputation is of ſo tender a nature, that it is not always in the power even of innocence itſelf to preſerve it. Thoſe who have only been

SERM. VI.

careleſs, are generally cenſured as guilty, and calumny will oftenpuniſh for crimes which have never been committed. There is a great degree of imprudence, therefore, in laying ourſelves open to ſuſpicion: ſhe, who is ſo indifferent as to affect folly, is in great danger of falling a ſacrifice to it; and the wife who is very vicious in appearance, doth not deſerve much leſs blame than her who is ſo in reality. The truly good and virtuous wife, will conſider the honour of her huſband as a precious jewel entruſted to her care, which it is her duty to preſerve free from every ſpot, or blemiſh that might diminiſh its luſtre or impair its beauty.

THE beſt preſervative of female honour, therefore, is female delicacy: modeſty is the hand-maid of virtue, appointed to tend, to dreſs, and ſerve her: it is, as it were, a kind of armour, which

which the ſex ſhould always bear, both to adorn and to defend them; and, when that is laid aſide, they are neither beautiful nor ſafe. SERM. VI.

THERE was a time when the reſervedneſs and modeſty of women exempted them from many conſiderable privileges which they now enjoy; when that unbounded freedom of converſe, which the preſent age allows, was held inconſiſtent with female delicacy; when not the gay companion, nor the lively viſitant, but the good and prudent wife, were eſteemed the beſt of characters: it would become thoſe, who have introduced and encouraged this change of manners, to conſider, whether the pleaſures have not interfered with the buſineſs, and the duties of life been ſacrificed to the impertinencies of it; whether the matrons of former ages were not, at leaſt, as modeſt, if not ſo well bred, as thoſe who come

SERM. VI.

after them; and whether, what the ſex nath gained in politeneſs, it hath not loſt in virtue? There is, (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) a ſex of ſoul, as well as body, and the diſtinction is as viſible in the one, as in the other. The female mind, as well as form, is naturally more ſoft and delicate; the ſpirits more briſk and volatile; the heart more immediately ſuſceptible of pain or pleaſure than our own: as their frame can boaſt of finer harmony, ſymmetry and proportion, though of leſs ſtrength, firmneſs and activity, in the ſame manner, the ſentiments of the ſofter ſex abound in a peculiar tenderneſs, delicacy and vivacity: if they are not ſolid, they are refined; if they are not correct, they are lively; if they are not juſt and ſerious, they are natural and chearful; to each is imparted by the providence of God that which the other ſtands in need of: man was born to govern, to guard

guard and protect; women to obey, to please, and to reward. When men, therefore, sink into sloth and effeminacy, and women assume a masculine boldness and audacity, they are acting contrary to the designs of nature, and of God; and can never be the objects of esteem or approbation, much less of love or affection. Whilst, like neighbouring monarchs, they are careful to remain in their own territories, and do not encroach on each other's borders, they will be respected as lawful sovereigns: but when, like usurpers, they invade the rights and privileges of each other, they will be treated as such; and whilst they are employed in the conquest of kingdoms which do not belong to them, will be deprived of their own.

SERM. VI.

PASS we on, then, to that best cement of domestic happiness, mutual forbearance and complacency; and these, perhaps,

SERM. VI. haps, like conſtancy and fidelity, are, in ſome meaſure, more neceſſary on the part of the wife, than of the huſband.

THOSE who have the management and direction of affairs, whatever ſtation, buſineſs or profeſſion they are engaged in, muſt meet with various croſſes, misfortunes and diſappointments: the ways of this life are, at beſt, but rugged and uneven; briars and thorns ſpring up on every ſide of us: and, even the moſt flowery and delightful paths are full of danger; man, therefore, as moſt able, is appointed to perform the journey. The greateſt part of the world are forced to gain their living by the ſweat of their brow: the toil and labour of providing for his houſhold, of acquiring what is neceſſary and convenient, falls to the lot of the induſtrious huſband. Too well we know, that in an evil and corrupt world, the beſt intentions, and the moſt honeſt endeavours of the beſt men may

may be fruſtrated; loſſes, vexations and troubles are perpetually ariſing: ſuch accidents, and ſuch we are every day liable to, will ſower the ſweeteſt diſpoſitions, throw a gloom over the chearfuleſt face, and fill the firmeſt heart with anguiſh and diſquietude. How then, is the good and virtuous wife, the partner of his joys and ſorrows, to behave in the hour of diſtreſs? Is ſhe to reproach his melancholy, to inflame his paſſion, to embitter his diſquietude? or, is ſhe, on the other hand, to endeavour to calm his ſorrows and ſooth his affliction, to conſider the wounds of adverſity which pain him as received in her ſervice, the diſquietude which he feels, endured for her ſake? Is ſhe not to give way to that petulancy or anger which appears in him? to eſteem it, not as the natural inmate of his breaſt, but as an importunate, intruding ſtranger, brought thither by misfortunes and diſappointments: the greater, therefore, his ſorrows are, the greater

ſhould

SERM. VI.

ſhould be her care to remove them; her tenderneſs ſhould encreaſe in proportion to his diſquietude, her forbearance to his warmth, her complacency to his uneaſineſs: her ſmiles are to make amends for the frowns of the world, and her love and kindneſs to compenſate for its hatred and ingratitude.

BUT, all thoſe branches of conjugal duty, which are above enumerated, muſt proceed from that great ſource of happineſs, true and genuine affection. Love, as I obſerved to you in a preceding diſcourſe, is the active, enlivening, invigorating principle, which muſt ſet in motion the whole circle of relative duties; without this, neither child nor father, ſervant nor maſter, can acquit themſelves well and faithfully, in the diſcharge of their duty: but, if in them it is requiſite, in that which is now before us, it is indiſpenſible: in them it muſt preſide and direct;

direct; but in this, it muſt itſelf operate conſtantly, ſteadily and invariably. But it often happens, that indifference holds the place of affection; and that thoſe, who ſhould be moſt ſolicitous about each other's welfare and happineſs, are moſt careleſs of it: a ſtate ſo undeſirable, is an emblem of that natural ſleep we ſo often experience, when the ſoul of man is benumm'd and ſtupified, when nature performs her office and operations with heavineſs and reluctance. Inſtead of being ſurprized, therefore, that ſo many are unhappy, it ſhould rather raiſe our admiration to find ſo few. When we reflect on the inconſiderable number of thoſe who are joined by love and affection; when we conſider, that half the world are united by ambition, pride, ſelf-intereſt, force or artifice, how is it poſſible they ſhould be bleſt? Shall we not rather wonder to ſee the chain ſo durable as it is, when the links which

SERM. VI.

SERM. VI.

compoſe it are of ſo weak a nature? From the want of, or from the loſs of affection, flow all thoſe cares and jealouſies, all thoſe troubles and animoſities, which break the bands of nuptial harmony, and poiſon the fountain of domeſtic happineſs: Without this, indeed, fidelity hath no proper ſupport to reſt itſelf on, prudence, no end to promote, tenderneſs and complacency, no object to employ themſelves in the ſervice of; whereas, on the other hand, where this is, ſcarce any thing elſe can be wanted: it improves the charms of beauty where it is, and ſupplies the place where it is not; it commands reſpect and obedience from the obſtinate and perverſe, conſtancy from the moſt inconſtant, diſcretion from the moſt indiſcreet; it poliſhes the indelicate, ſoftens the rude, humbles the proud and haughty; it adds, in ſhort, to the bloom of youth, health and plenty; and gives vigour, joy and pleaſure,

ſure, even to old age, ſickneſs and adverſity. SERM. VI.

BUT laſtly:

THE good wife ſhould be *pious*;

Religion is the great bond which links together, and unites every virtue: piety will enſure fidelity, enforce obedience, encourage prudence, increaſe tenderneſs, and double affection. When the duty to a huſband is conſidered, as it ought to be conſidered, as a duty to God alſo, then, and then only, will it be duly and punctually performed: ſhe, indeed, can never be a good wife, who is not a good chriſtian. It is not to be expected, that ſhe who pays no deference or reſpect to her Creator and her God, will obey her lord and huſband; or that ſhe will ever ſubmit herſelf to human ordinances, who neglects the divine: whilſt, on the other hand, ſhe who is pious and religious, will at the ſame time that ſhe

SERM. VI.

is making herſelf amiable in the ſight of man, recommend herſelf to the favour and protection of God. If her huſband is inſenſible of her affection, God will not be ſo; if he forgetteth, God will remember; if he is ungrateful, God will reward her.

To ſum up all, therefore, as I did in the preceding duties, in the character of

A GOOD WIFE.

THE *good wife* then, is one, who ever mindful of the ſolemn contract which ſhe hath entered into, is ſtrictly and conſcientiouſly virtuous, conſtant, and faithful to her huſband; chaſte, pure, and unblemiſhed in every thought, word and deed: ſhe is humble and modeſt from reaſon and conviction, ſubmiſſive from choice, and obedient from inclination: what ſhe acquires by love and tenderneſs, ſhe preſerves by prudence and

and diſcretion: ſhe makes it her buſi- SERM.
neſs to ſerve, and her pleaſure to oblige VI.
her huſband; as conſcious, that every thing which promotes his happineſs, muſt in the end, contribute to her own: her tenderneſs relieves his cares, her affections ſoftens his diſtreſs, her good humour and complacency leſſen and ſubdue his afflictions: *ſhe openeth her mouth*, as Solomon ſays, *with wiſdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindneſs: ſhe looketh well to the ways of her huſband, and eateth not the bread of idleneſs: her children riſe up and call her bleſſed: her huſband alſo, and he praiſeth her.* Laſtly, as a good and pious chriſtian, ſhe looks up with an eye of gratitude to the great diſpenſer and diſpoſer of all things, to the huſband of the widow, and father of the fatherleſs, intreating his divine favour and aſſiſtance in this and every other moral and religious duty; well ſatisfied, that if ſhe duly and punctually diſcharges her ſeveral offices

SERM. VI. offices and relations in this life, ſhe ſhall be bleſſed and rewarded for it in another.

TO CONCLUDE, therefore, in the words of Solomon, addreſſed to the good and virtuous wife: *Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, ſhe ſhall be praiſed.*

Fear not, for thou ſhalt not be aſhamed; neither be thou confounded, for thy Maker is thy huſband, the Lord of Hoſts is his name.

Now to God the Father, &c.

THE

THE DUTY OF HUSBANDS TO WIVES.

BRITISH MUSEUM

SERMON VII.

DUTY TO WIVES.

EPHES. V. 33.

Let every one of you love his wife even as himself.

THE gracious providence of God, which is always anxious for our welfare, and ſolicitous for our preſervation, hath ordained that all thoſe ties and relations in human life, which conſtitute part of our duty, ſhould likewiſe tend to our intereſt and happineſs; and that the ſame love and affection, which make us agreeable to each other, ſhould, at the ſame time, render us amiable in the ſight of God:

SERM. VII.

and amongſt theſe there is not perhaps any which ſeems to demand our gratitude in a ſtronger manner, than that rational and intimate connection which is now before us; the connection of man and wife: an inſtitution, which ſo viſibly carries with it the mark of divine approbation, and is dignified by the ſanction of the moſt high. It is indeed amongſt thoſe privileges which ſeem moſt peculiarly to diſtinguiſh man from the inferior parts of the creation: whilſt brutes indulge themſelves in the unreſtrained freedom of ſenſual appetite, and ſatisfy their luſts and deſires without delicacy or diſtinction, man makes uſe of his reaſon to direct his choice, to fix it on ſome favourite individual, there to confine all his cares, and center all his affection, *and they two*, as the ſcripture expreſſeth it, *become one fleſh*.

HAVING

SERM. VII.

HAVING already therefore treated on the duty of wives to huſbands, I proceed now to conſider that reciprocal love, regard, and eſteem, which are due from the huſband to the wife.

Let every one of you, ſays the apoſtle, *ſo love his wife even as himſelf.*

UNDER the general term of love, we may, I think comprehend the following neceſſary and eſſential branches of this important duty; namely, regard and affection, conſtancy and fidelity, tenderneſs and delicacy, prudence and diſcretion, good-nature and indulgence, care and protection, induſtry and ſobriety, piety and virtue.

LOVE, as I took occaſion to obſerve to you, is the great corner ſtone, on which muſt always be raiſed the foundation of domeſtic happineſs; to form

SERM. VII.

this attachment therefore, it is firſt and above all things neceſſary, that a partial affection be contracted towards the perſon; and as this muſt depend in a great meaſure on external appearance, the gracious providence of God hath ſo ordained, that the opinions and taſtes of men, with regard to outward forms, ſhould be as various as the forms themſelves; what ſtrikes one with the idea of beauty may ſhock another by an appearance of deformity: thus doth imagination in this caſe ſupply the place of truth and reaſon, and even the deception of our ſenſes contribute to the enjoyment of them. The ſame beneficent power, which produced order out of chaos, and which commands the jarring elements to bring forth harmony, hath alſo from the various inclinations of different minds, and the wayward deciſions of arbitrary fancy, contrived to promote the general and univerſal happineſs.

IT muſt be confeſſed, that, in the choice of many, too great a regard is paid to external appearances; the luſtre of beauty is apt to dazzle, and the ſprightlineſs of wit is apt to betray; men for the moſt part are ſuch poor architects as to build the ſtructure of domeſtic happineſs on a very weak and tottering foundation, when the pillars which are to ſupport it muſt of courſe moulder and decay; it is a houſe built upon the ſand, the waves of jealouſy and anger break in upon it, the ſtorms of ſickneſs and of age beat upon that houſe, and it falls. Laſting materials ſhould doubtleſs be ſought for, where laſting happineſs is propoſed; qualities and perfections, not glaring but uſeful, not ſhining but ſolid, ſuch as are calculated not merely to adorn and beautify, but to ſtrengthen and enrich the edifice.

A PARTIAL

SERM. VII.

A PARTIAL and ſtrong attachment therefore to the form and manners, an affectionate eſteem of the qualities and diſpoſition of the woman is abſolutely and indiſpenſibly neceſſary to conjugal felicity: both parties, therefore, I cannot but think, have in this point an indiſputable right to judge for themſelves, and where they do not, we find by conſtant experience, there is no laſting felicity; nothing indeed can be more unreaſonable than the arbitrary commands and interpoſition of parental authority in this reſpect; *thoſe whom God hath joined let no man put aſunder*, and the command when revers'd is perhaps equally binding, thoſe whom God hath put aſunder let no man join; let none pretend to unite thoſe whom different paſſions, ſentiments, tempers, and inclinations ſeem, by nature deſigned to ſeparate from each other.

FROM

SERM. VII.

FROM this partial affection to the perſon proceeds, and from that alone can proceed, the next great and eſſential virtue in the huſband, fidelity: the want of this doth indeed naturally diſunite the bonds of wedlock, and utterly incapacitate both from the leaſt enjoyment of mutual happineſs, and yet how many amongſt us are unpardonably careleſs and guilty in this important article!

INFIDELITY on the part of the huſband is indeed grown ſo univerſal, that its oppoſite virtue is almoſt out of countenance; it is treated as venial by one ſex, and ſubmitted to as unavoidable by the other; the world is ſo complaiſant as to ſtile it gallantry, and becauſe it is known to be faſhionable, it is not condemned as unlawful: thus vice is palliated with the name of error, and that which is in reality the higheſt diſgrace to our nature, is conſidered as an

SERM. VII.

an ornament of it. Cuſtom hath, I know not how, given a kind of ſanction to it on one ſide, and at the ſame time condemned it on the other; as if God had, like man, made his laws with partiality and injuſtice, and that the ſeventh commandment were enjoined only againſt the weaker veſſel; but let thoſe who thus miſerably deceive themſelves remember, that the ſame ſolemn contract hath engaged both: that if they neglect the obligation, and ſpurn at the command, it is not the injured wife alone who will reſent the infringement of it: good men will conſider it as an outrage againſt virtue here; and God will aſſuredly puniſh it as ſuch hereafter.

BUT to affection and fidelity, the good huſband muſt alſo add tenderneſs and delicacy. It is the good-nature and complacency of the hoſt, which makes the pleaſure of the ~~conqueſt~~ banquet; and in the manner

manner of conferring a favour, there is almoſt as much merit as in the beſtowing it. The huſband, therefore, is to conſider not how much, but to whom he gives; not what he ſpeaks only, but to whom it is ſpoken: in his behaviour to his wife, the heart muſt ſeem to follow the hand, and the mind to direct the tongue; he ſhould ſuit that delicacy which he would oblige, and imitate that elegance which he would pleaſe. To a wife, mere civility is coldneſs, and, mere complaiſance is indifference; to her a more expreſſive kindneſs ſhould add a grace to every word, and a peculiar tenderneſs diffuſe itſelf over every action. It is, indeed, this behaviour alone, which can ſoften and temper the rudeneſs of maſculine ſeverity, and give a poliſh to the rougher manners of one half of mankind; it is this tender commerce, and this delicate connection, which throws a luſtre over the converſation of the ci-

SERM. VII.

SERM. VII. vilized world, and conſtitutes in a great meaſure, the moſt elegant and refined pleaſures of human life.

BUT further:

To love, fidelity and tenderneſs, the huſband muſt likewiſe add, prudence and diſcretion.

HALF the miſeries and diſquietudes, half the interruptions of conjugal peace and domeſtic felicity ariſe from deſires too ardent, and hopes too ſanguine; both parties, at their firſt entrance into the nuptial ſtate, eſpecially in youth, are apt to form to themſelves ideas, very inadequate aud diſproportioned to the condition of human life; to entertain deluſive notions of a romantic and viſionary paradiſe, where the earth is cloathed with perpetual verdure, the flowers never fade, and the fruits are immortal; but when, inſtead of this, they

they begin, perhaps in a ſhort time, to feel the thorns ſpringing up under their feet, when they perceive the fruits to wither, and the verdure to decay, they are filled with unreaſonable wonder and aſtoniſhment; they had accuſtomed themſelves to look for nothing leſs than uninterrupted health, conſtant ſucceſs, invariable harmony and affection: they ſuffer, therefore, not ſo much from the evil which they have as from the want of that which they have not. At the beginning of the voyage, the ſky is generally clear, the waters calm and unruffled; but, to conclude from thence, that we are to ſail through life, without ſtorm or tempeſt, is, to the laſt degree, abſurd and unreaſonable. It is the duty and the intereſt of both therefore, and eſpecially of him who ſits at the helm, to prepare againſt the worſt, to ſteer the veſſel with all poſſible care and diligence, and conduct it ſafely into the harbour of peace and felicity.

SERM. VII.

SERM. VII.

PROCEED we then to another neceſſary branch of the huſband's duty, good-nature and indulgence. In a world ſo full of miſeries and misfortunes, errors and inadvertencies, paſſions and follies, differences both in opinion and practice muſt ariſe, where the connection is cloſe and intimate; mutual complacency and forbearance, therefore, are abſolutely and indiſpenſably neceſſary in the married ſtate; power is never ſo amiable, as when cloathed with meekneſs and humility; and the ſuperiority of our own underſtanding will be always moſt evident, when it condeſcends to forgive or to relieve the weakneſs of another. When women offend, therefore, they are to be conſidered as women; as beings whoſe power and faculties are not ſo extenſive, whoſe judgment and reaſon are not ſo ſtrong and ſolid as our own; whoſe experience is confined within

in a much narrower circle; whoſe understandings are limited and enfeebled by education; who are liable therefore, with the greater eaſe to be ſeduced or impoſed on; not ſufficiently aware of arts which they are themſelves ignorant of; nor upon their guard againſt that guilt, which they never practice. SERM. VII.

VANITY and extravagance are the ſtale and trite excuſes for cruelty, inconſtancy, and inhumanity in the worſt of huſbands; and yet, certain it is, that he who is the cauſe ought not to murmur at the effect; and he who makes his own miſery, hath no right to complain of it: what ſhall we ſay, if the weeds, which thus overun the garden, are planted there and cultivated too by our own hands? Flattery, too laviſhly beſtowed, will naturally produce that pride which is thus condemned; and that pride enflamed and encouraged will

SERM. VII.

will as naturally beget luxury and extravagance; is it not moſt abſurd then to be ſurpriſed that the idol expects worſhip, when men have taken ſo much pains to raiſe it; or that when they have been at ſuch expence to feed a vice, they ſhould be aſtoniſhed at the ſize and the increaſe of it?

IF the huſband is already poſſeſſed of love, fidelity, tenderneſs, prudence, and good-nature, he will always remember that moſt eſſential part of his duty to his wife, which conſiſts in the care and protection of her, in providing for and maintaining her, as well as his ſituation, rank, and circumſtances in life will permit.

THE ſuperior ſtrength, power, and capacities of one ſex, as I have before obſerved to you, were originally deſigned to protect and preſerve the other: woman is left by nature, weak and defenceleſs,

fenceleſs, unable to ſtruggle with the troubles and difficulties, or contend with the fraud and malice of an ill-natured and deſigning world: on man, who is more able, ſhe muſt rely for aid and ſupport; this aid and ſupport, this neceſſary care and aſſiſtance, the huſband is bound conſtantly to afford her: he receives her, for the moſt part, from the hands of thoſe, under whoſe wing ſhe had till that time been ſafe and happy; from thoſe whoſe goodneſs he promiſeth to ſupply, and whoſe indulgence he hath ſworn to imitate: he ſnatches her from the boſom of parental tenderneſs to feed and cheriſh her in his own: as he hath taken her therefore from one protection, it is incumbent on him to provide her with another: to give her, without ſelfiſhneſs or reluctance, as her indiſputable right, a ſhare of all that he hath, of all the good things which God hath pleaſed to beſtow upon him; ſhe hath

SERM. VII.

SERM. VI. hath an undoubted claim to all his joys and pleaſures, and he hath no right to withhold any thing from her, but his ſorrows and misfortunes.

WITHOUT ſome degree of ſobriety, vigilance, and aſſiduity, a man cannot provide the neceſſaries and conveniencies of life for himſelf; and the difficulty will of courſe increaſe, in proportion to the number of thoſe he is to take care of: diligence and frugality therefore are in a huſband, qualities eſſentially neceſſary; becauſe the welfare and happineſs of the whole family depends upon him: if he falls, he falls like Sampſon, and drags after him the ruins of the whole building.

BUT, true love and affection is not confined within the narrow bounds of our own exiſtence; it extends itſelf to future times, and lives, as it were, beyond the grave. The good huſband therefore, will

will think himſelf bound, not only to provide for and maintain the wife of his boſom whilſt ſhe remains there, but alſo when he is ſeparated from her; not only during his own life, but her's alſo: he will endeavour to reſerve, if poſſible, ſuch a proviſion for her future ſupport, comfort and ſatisfaction, as may make her leſs ſenſible of his loſs, but more ſo of his unalterable regard and affection for her. SERM. VII.

THE widow and the fatherleſs do, ſurely, of all, moſt deſerve relief and commiſeration, and though they ſometimes may, yet it is but too certain they do not always meet with it; what is the buſineſs of one, is generally neglected by all; men have connections of their own which demand their attention; it is no wonder therefore, that the cries of the widow are not heard, nor her tears regarded: becauſe, the very ſame reaſon which made one ſo careful of and ſo anxious for her whilſt he lived, is the

SERM. VII.

very reaſon why ſo many neglect her when he is no more: her circumſtance at the beſt, is the lot of anguiſh and diſquietude: with all that the huſband can do, ſhe muſt be wretched; and the leaſt he can do, is to take care that ſhe ſhall not be deſtitute. The proviſion ſhould be proportioned, moreover, to her ſituation in life; the better ſhe always hath lived, the better he ſhould take care ſhe always ſhould live: the longer ſhe hath been uſed to affluence and plenty, the leſs, no doubt, will ſhe be able to ſtruggle with penury and want: her preſent happineſs, where no proviſion is made, can only contribute to her future miſery; and the joys which are paſt, will embitter the ſorrows that are to come. This, therefore, is a duty which love will always dictate, and gratitude inſpire. It may be ſaid, indeed, by the low and ſelfiſh, that where we do not receive, we are not obliged to pay; that death cancels this and every other

other bond; but ſurely, to the noble and diſintereſted mind, there is a pleaſure in promoting other's happineſs, even when it is no longer conducive to our own: and it is always more generous to beſtow a favour where we can never expect a return for it. SERM. VII.

But if frugality, induſtry, and ſobriety are requiſite in a huſband, ſo alſo above all are piety and virtue.

WOMEN are generally reſpected and eſteemed in the world, according to the merit and character of their huſbands: for her ſake therefore, as well as for his own, he ſhould be more than ordinarily careful to preſerve his reputation unſpotted, and to maintain his honour and integrity inviolable: the world may be ill-natured enough to impute his errors to her advice, and his defects to her example: if he is careleſs, ſhe will be reproached; if he is vicious, ſhe will be

SERM. VII.

condemned; his follies will make her contemptible, and his vices render her unhappy. Thus, the innocence of the one may ſuffer for the guilt of the other; and thoſe who have not committed the crime be involved in the puniſhment of it. If the huſband loves his wife therefore, he will be virtuous and good, that ſhe may be honoured and reſpected: if he loves his wife, he will be pious and religious, that he may make her pious and religious alſo. And to this end, it is highly neceſſary, though it is not always attended to, that huſband and wife be as much united as poſſible, with regard to their religious ſentiments; that they *walk together in the houſe of God as friends*. Difference of opinion in this important point will naturally create and draw along with it difference in others; and doubtleſs, where happineſs is to depend on union and harmony, we ſhould be careful to remove every poſſible cauſe of diſſention.

To

To ſum up all therefore, in the character of

A GOOD HUSBAND.

THE *good huſband* is one, who, wedded not by intereſt but by choice, is conſtant as well from inclination as from principle: he treats his wife with delicacy as a woman, with tenderneſs as a friend: he attributes her follies to her weakneſs, her imprudence to her inadvertency; he paſſes them over therefore with good-nature, and pardons them with indulgence: all his care and induſtry are employed for her welfare; all his ſtrength and power are exerted for her ſupport and protection; he is more anxious to preſerve his own character and reputation, becauſe her's is blended with it: laſtly, the good huſband is pious and religious, that he may animate her faith by his practice, and enforce

SERM. VII.

enforce the precepts of chriſtianity by his own example: that, as they join to promote each other's happineſs in this world, they may unite to inſure eternal joy and felicity in that which is to come.

To CONCLUDE.

I HAVE endeavoured in this and the preceding diſcourſes, to illuſtrate and explain what are generally termed, the RELATIVE DUTIES: a matter of the utmoſt conſequence to ſociety, as on the punctual diſcharge of them, the felicity of all mankind, doth in a great meaſure depend. If they were univerſally, regularly, and faithfully performed, the world would no longer be a ſcene of vice, miſery and confuſion, but a delicious paradiſe, the ſeat of joy and happineſs, and no imperfect emblem of that bleſſed ſtate, which the good and virtuous will not fail toinherit hereafter.

You

You will eaſily perceive, my brethren, that I have purpoſely avoided entering into thoſe minuter parts of every duty which muſt depend on the various ranks, circumſtances and conditions of human life; I have only ſketch'd as it were, the outlines, which muſt be filled up and finiſhed by your own ſenſe and obſervation.

In the mean time, let us put up our prayers to the ſupreme diſpenſer of every good gift, that he will aſſiſt us in the performance of theſe moral and religious duties; that he will inſpire our hearts with that love and benevolence, that care and induſtry, that zeal and aſſiduity which are neceſſary in the diſcharge of them; that children and parents, ſervants and maſters, wives and huſbands, may all punctually and regularly perform the taſk appointed for them

SERM. VII. them, which alone can promote their eaſe, ſatisfaction, and happineſs here, and ſecure eternal joy and felicity hereafter.

Now to God the Father, &c.

19 FE 67

FINIS.